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20th
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— SPECIAL —

A^{to}Z
of
FALLOUT 4
The ultimate guide to
2015's Wasteland

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

UNCHARTED 4

Naughty Dog on the script that moved the team to tears,
new set-pieces and The Last Of Us 2

WE'RE #1 FOR...

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

Plus four Star Wars remasters
you'll be playing this Christmas

ATTACK ON TITAN COMES TO PS4

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**WORST MOMENTS
OF PLAYSTATION**

**YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORIES
FROM PLAYSTATION'S PAST**

**WHY WWE 2K16 WILL GIVE EVERY
OTHER SPORTS GAME AN RKO**

**TEARAWAY UNFOLDED, MAD MAX,
ZOMBI & PES 2016 REVIEWED**



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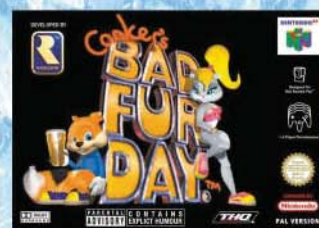
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23 OCTOBER IN A SHOP FAR, FAR AWAY. (AND NEARBY, TOO.)



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Welcome



GAME OF THE MONTH
Metal Gear Solid V
FAVE PS1 GAME
Final Fantasy VII

**"DON'T MISS
OUR TELL-ALL
LOOK BEHIND
THE SCENES OF
YOUR MOST
WANTED GAME,
UNCHARTED 4."**

Twenty years ago we began the
greatest PlayStation magazine the
world has ever seen. There have been
many ups and a few downs along the way,
but here we are, two decades on, and OPM
is bigger and better than ever. For our 20th
anniversary we're celebrating the finest
gaming dynasty on the planet, and we do so
with so many features and industry legends
that we needed two magazines to hold it all.

A few of this month's highlights? Our
exclusive, tell-all look behind the scenes of
your most-wanted PS4 game, Uncharted 4;
some of the biggest names in the industry
sharing their Secrets Of PlayStation; your
favourite PlayStation memories; and our
refreshed Hall Of Fame, in which we feature
only the best of the best for your consoles.

There's something big coming, too. Mark
23 Oct (or earlier if you subscribe) on your
calendar, because we've waited all year to
unleash our Star Wars Special, and we've
secured the best Star Wars Battlefront
access of *any* galaxy – be it here or one far,
far away – just for you. Enjoy it!

Matthew Pellett

EDITOR

matthew.pellett@futurenet.com

@Pelloki

**Secure
your copy
of next month's
Star Wars Special!**

Subscribe on p88
by 6 Oct

THIS MONTH'S ANNIVERSARY ARMY...



Dave Meikleham
NEWS EDITOR

Our molten maniac is sadly
bidding us adieu to return
to Scotland. Edinburgh
DJs: get the Jurassic Park
OST prepped for requests.



Dom Reeseigh-Lincoln
PRODUCTION EDITOR

After two years here, Star
Wars-mad Dom is also off
– to queue for The Force
Awakens for three months.



Milford Coppock
MANAGING ART EDITOR

OPSM veteran Milf recalls
PS1's launch as if it were
yesterday. No wonder:
MGS's #1 fan has been
puffing on Phantom Cigars.



Tom Sykes
GUEST WRITER

Our fearless whispering
wordsmith has been telling
everyone he likes Mad Max.
"Witness me," he bellows at the
top of his voice, inaudibly.

GAME OF THE MONTH
Metal Gear Solid V
FAVE PS1 GAME
Dino Crisis 2

GAME OF THE MONTH
Mad Max
FAVE PS1 GAME
Tekken 3

GAME OF THE MONTH
Metal Gear Solid V
FAVE PS1 GAME
Metal Gear Solid

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Metal Gear Solid V
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An imminent Beta. A Vader-adorned PS4. Retro podracing. It's a Star Wars news-o-rama.

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Only one man could grace our 20th anniversary cover. Why Drake's farewell will leave you in bits.

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Where there's smooth, there's always rough. Proof we weren't always perfect.

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Atoi returns, makes the leap to PS4 and offers a whimsical remake of a classic.

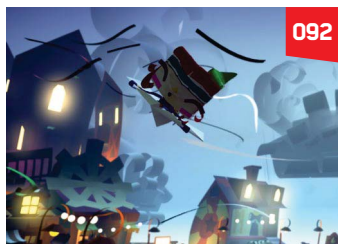
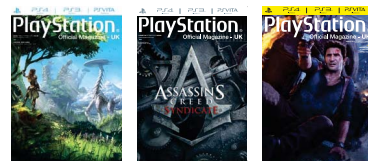
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The Road Warrior screams onto PS4, but can it live up the hype?

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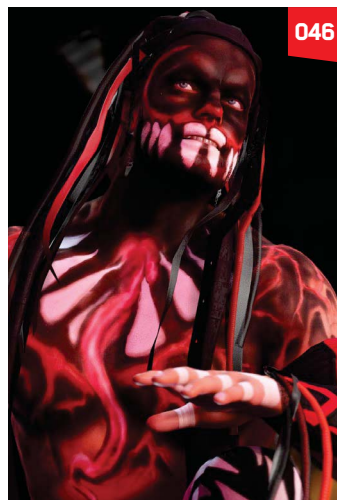
Turn to p88 for a deal so good we're not sure how we can afford it! *reads small print* Team OPM aren't getting their wages this month? Oh, okay...



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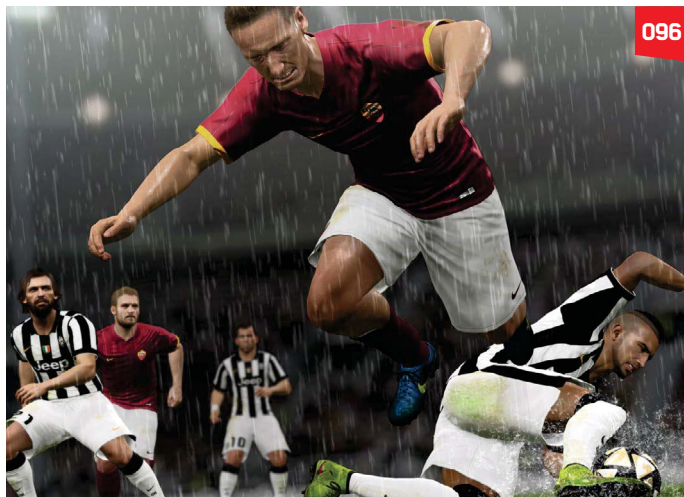
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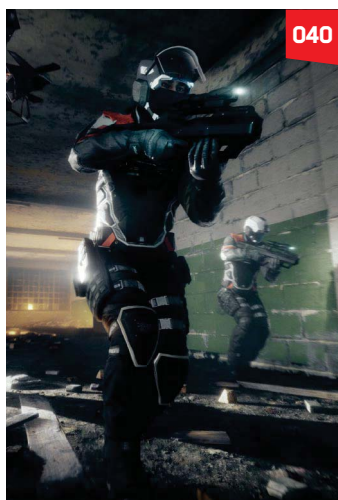
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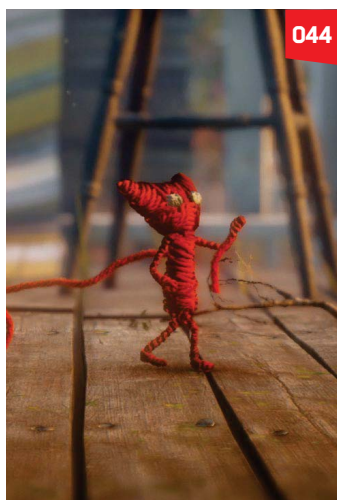
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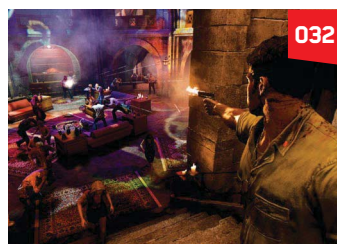
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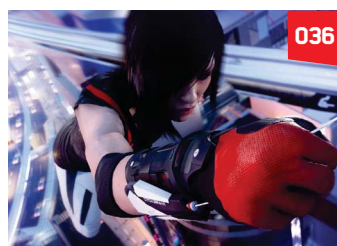
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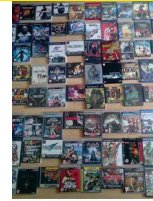
RETRO STATION
Classics revisited

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So now we know why EA
claimed "The Force Is
Strong With PlayStation"
back at E3 2015.



👉👉 SONY HAS ANNOUNCED ONE OF THE
COOLEST PLAYSTATIONS OUR FORCE-
LOVING EYES HAVE EVER SEEN. 🗨️🗨️



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Meet the fan with OPM's top 100 titles.

The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

New Darth Vader-themed PS4 is the absolute Sith

Star Wars baddie adds sexy Sony Force to Battlefront, while Beta is imminent

01

"Obi-Wan never told you what happened to your PS4." "He told me enough. He told me you

stole it." "No, I AM YOUR NEW PS4." C'mon, it so *is* going to be, though, right? How the hell could you say no to the Dark Lord of the Sith when his new PS4 bundle gets here?

Last month, we told you in our 'Better On PlayStation 4' feature that Sony and EA's Star Wars deal would lead to 'something'... We just didn't expect said thing to be quite so strong with the Force. To celebrate the release of both Star Wars Battlefront and Disney Infinity 3.0 (don't forget its trilogy of Galaxy Far, Far Away-focused Play Sets) on PS4, Sony has announced one of the coolest PlayStation console and pad combinations our Force-loving eyes have ever seen.

Writing on the PlayStation Blog, an excited Adam Boyes shared all the details on this ace, extra

wheezy new PS4. "The Limited Edition Star Wars Battlefront PS4 Bundle will include a custom 500GB limited edition PS4 system (CUH-1200 series) and DualShock 4 Wireless Controller inspired by Darth Vader," said SCEA's VP of publisher relations. "The fully customized PS4 features an image of Darth Vader, as well as a repeated Star Wars logo across the top of the system."

SITH HAPPENS

"The Darth Vader edition DualShock 4 is inspired by Vader's chest panel and features the repeated Star Wars logo on its touchpad," continues Boyes. We must admit, we're loving that evil red D-pad...

Best tell your raging Midichlorians to simmer down a second, though: there's more. The bundle also includes a redeem code for four remastered LucasArts games: Super Star Wars, Racer Revenge, Jedi Starfighter and Bounty Hunter. Not only are enhanced graphics promised, but these retro gems also offer trophy support.





The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



PADS ON TOUR

We hope the awesome Star Wars DualShock 4 gets sold on its own. Just look at it. The red and blue shoulder buttons... Those Stormtrooper-white sticks... That lone red face button... Truly, the circle is now complete.



Never played any of them? We don't blame you. After all, you're dealing with three old PS2 games and a 23-year-old platformer. If you're in the dark over these retro Star Wars hits, then you best let us OPM guide you through...

X-WING AND A PRAYER

First up, Super Star Wars is a 2D shooter/platform hybrid that first appeared on the SNES in the early '90s. It follows the plot of Episode IV, and lets you play as several characters, including Luke, Han and Chewie. It's pretty primitive by today's standards – time has not been kind to its fugly X-Wing sections. Still, here's hoping those promised spruced-up visuals can make it more than a curio piece.

Star Wars: Racer Revenge should need much less work. First released for PS2 back in 2002, this is a decent pod-racing game that takes place after the events of Episode I. It was actually rereleased through PSN for PS3 earlier in the year, and its clean visuals and breakneck racing have aged pretty well. Also, any game that lets you make Jake Lloyd crash into a pile of jagged rocks at 700mph suits us.

From smashing up Anakin's face to helping turn the tide of the Battle of Geonosis, Jedi Starfighter is more concerned with making you blow up vehicles than pipping them

to a podium place. Another early PS2 effort, this flight combat title sees a Jedi master and a sassy pirate battle the forces of the Trade Federation in hectic aerial duels. For further brownie points, it also has Jango Fett's iconic Slave I ship.

Speaking of Boba's daddy, the final game focuses squarely on Fett Senior. Bounty Hunter follows Jango as he undertakes some wetwork for Count Dooku in an action-heavy third-person shooter. Though it was met with a lukewarm reception back in late 2002, there's hope this PS4 remaster can sort out its shonky camera. Like Starfighter and Racer Revenge, it was released digitally for PS3 a few months back, yet this new redux should make Jango's hits a lot easier on the eye.

They'll all be available to buy separately if you don't grab the new PS4, but how much time you'll spend with them is questionable with Battlefront looking so strong. DICE has revealed two new modes for its shooter, starting with the large scale Supremacy, which plays out over the game's biggest maps.



The main goal in these scuffles is to capture five points spread throughout the arena. Each side begins with two points, then starts battling for the fifth. "You're thrown into a massive frontline, where your screen is filled with adversaries: infantry, Heroes, Walkers, and starfighters," says lead level designer Dennis Brännvall, on Battlefront's official site.

NO MORE HEROES

To further spice up proceedings, control zones need to be captured in a specific order once a team gains control over a map's central point. Heroes and Villains such as Dark Vader further chuck hot sauce all over Supremacy's action, too.

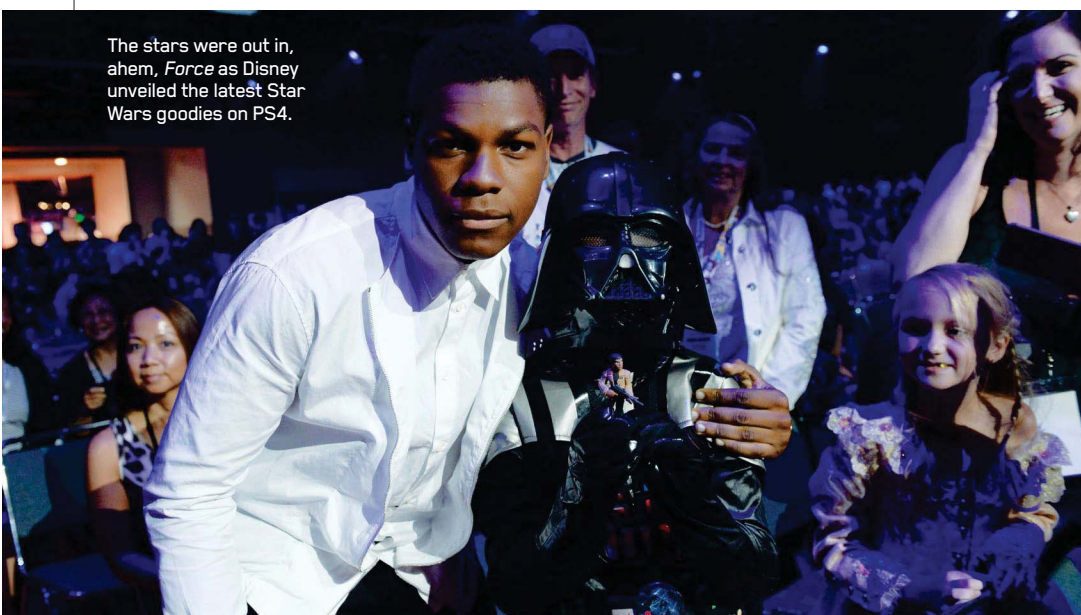
Another major slice of Star Wars news is word of Star Wars Battlefront's Beta, which kicks off in early October. Comprising three modes, you'll get to experience a 40-player Walker Assault on Hoth, a co-op Survival Mission on Tatooine and that second new mode, Drop Zone, which is an 8-vs-8 scuffle for drop pods similar to King Of The Hill.

For all the details on the incoming Beta keep your eyes glued to <http://starwars.ea.com/starwars/battlefront> – this is one online test you can't afford to skip...

★ Next issue is our Star Wars Special – make sure you don't miss it on 23 Oct.

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER FOLLOWS JANGO AS HE TAKES ON WETWORK FOR COUNT DOOKU.

The stars were out in, ahem, *Force* as Disney unveiled the latest Star Wars goodies on PS4.



■ Star Wars: Racer Revenge is still speedy. We do like some pod action.



■ Super Star Wars will certainly look 'interesting' if it gets upscaled to 1080p.



Heroes and Villains will play major roles in Battlefront's Supremacy mode. Bagsy Darth.

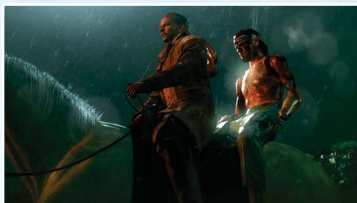


■ Star Wars: Bounty Hunter is hardly a classic, but a bit of current-gen spit and polish could yet breathe new life into Jango's murderous adventure.



The BF bundle comes with the Deluxe Edition of the game, which features bonus guns and emotes.

The sheer level of depth and freedom on offer is a watershed moment for game design.



V has come to (and scores an X)



Kojima sees Metal Gear Solid out with a 10/10 masterpiece

02

"Will the second act resolve 28 years of Metal Gear canon?" That's where we left you in last month's Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain's score-less review, a cliff-hanger worthy of Kojima himself.

With that second act beaten, and the true ending seen, we can finally put the incredible saga of Big Boss to rest.

Or can we? The Phantom Pain doesn't end by tying a neat bow on 28 years of Metal Gear's snaking (yes) story, but cheekily challenges everything you think you know, both about the later chronological events and what you've just been playing. Far from the closure of MGS 4, it

IT CHANGES EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MGS SERIES.

shares more DNA with the rug pull of MGS 2's shocking Raiden reveal.

That it gets away with the trick is down to the magnificence of the Act that precedes it. The Phantom Pain's second segment is a strange beast, offering a more concentrated dose of story than the first, but tying it to repeated missions. Tasks from the

first half reappear as Extreme remixes (less health, tougher enemies), Total Stealth tasks (with no Reflex mode safety net) and

Subsistence runs that strip you of equipment, buddies and support and ask you to acquire all tools on site. Needless to say, the Chicken Hat is well and truly plucked.

Some think these missions are lazy recycling, a reductive view that



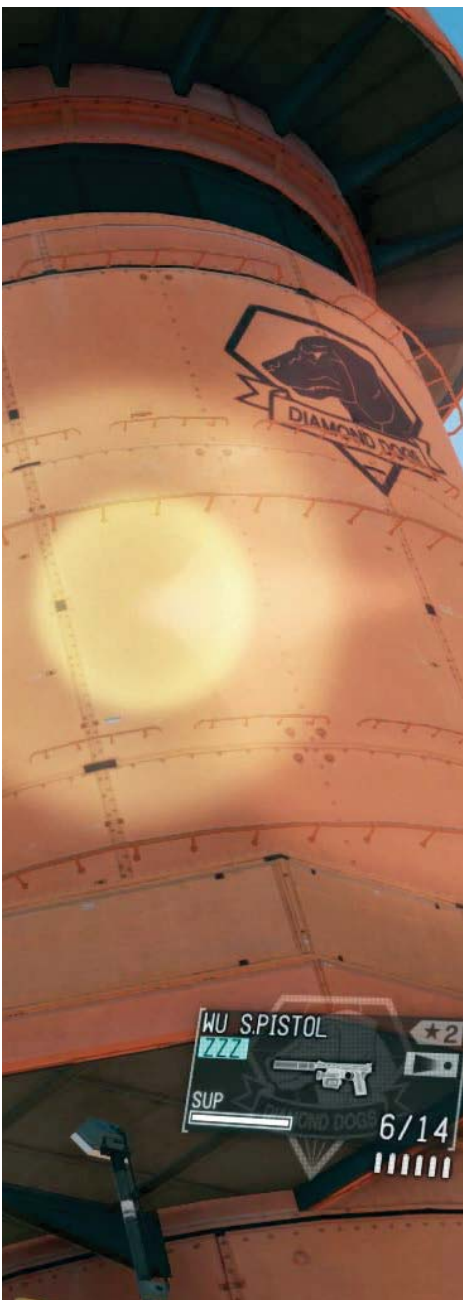
director talk

"I think Kojima-san has created a universe and a signature that is entirely his own. It can be incredibly emotional and deep, or incredibly insane and over the top. All these things make him an auteur - a guy that has his own voice, is recognisable. You know when you are in a Kojima-san universe."

Guillermo del Toro
Film director

ignores the way they force you to dig deeper into MGS V's layered systems. Knowing that a single sighting will end a Total Stealth run elevates even the simplest task into a clammy-palmed thriller, while a Subsistence run, where you're forced to turn an enemy's arsenal against them, is the truest the series has ever been to its original Tactical Espionage Action subtitle. Stealing landmines from no man's land in order to explode a communications outpost? That's the stuff of a legendary soldier.

Your reward for beating these tough tasks is to see the gaps in Act One slowly filled in. As we wrote last month, Act One is strangely self-contained for a Metal Gear; its dastardly scheme is closer to a Bond film, and far more accessible for it. If that Act was for the newcomer, Act Two is where Kojima drops some



WORLD WIDE WAR

If World Of Tanks finds a hefty enough audience – and we think it will – could Wargaming steer its other behemoths World Of Warplanes and World Of Warships to PS4 skies/seas in the future?

The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

Wargaming has captured almost 400 tank models, spanning WWI all the way through to 1960.



World Of Tanks roars onto PS4

Free-to-play phenomenon finally wages war

lore bombs, tying events of the previous 30 hours back to MGS 3 and Peace Walker and foreshadowing events to come. A lot is delivered through intel tapes, yes, but the really juicy stuff – The Man On Fire, The Third Child, Eli – gets to shine in some epic cutscenes.

What emerges is a game of two distinct halves: the greatest stealth game ever made, and something much more nostalgic, if never as indulgent as MGS 4's farewell tour. It's the former that earns it a coveted (and much-deserved) OPM 10/10 – the first original PS4 game to do so – but it's the latter, with all its ambiguities and strangeness, that sees Hideo Kojima leave the series on his own terms: cheeky, baffling and unrivalled.

★ Want to win our rare MGS V limited edition watch? Slither over to p90 now.

03

Start honing your warcry because Wargaming is at last bringing the intense online multiplayer action

of World Of Tanks to PS4. Since debuting on PC in 2010, five years of updates, tweaks and content packs make the game better than ever.

"We wanted to do it right for the PS4 version to ensure the same level of awesome gameplay we've been able to introduce to other platforms," says TJ Wagner, World

Of Tanks' executive producer. "We're now in the position to do that."

In this vehicular skirmisher, up to seven players per-team pick from five tank classes and square off in multi-mile maps. Although not quite a simulation, strategy is key. Pair off and rush in light tanks, for example, or hang back and unleash artillery.

Unless you live in Eastern Europe, you might not know just how huge

FIVE YEARS OF UPDATES MAKE THE EXPERIENCE BETTER THAN IT'S EVER BEEN.

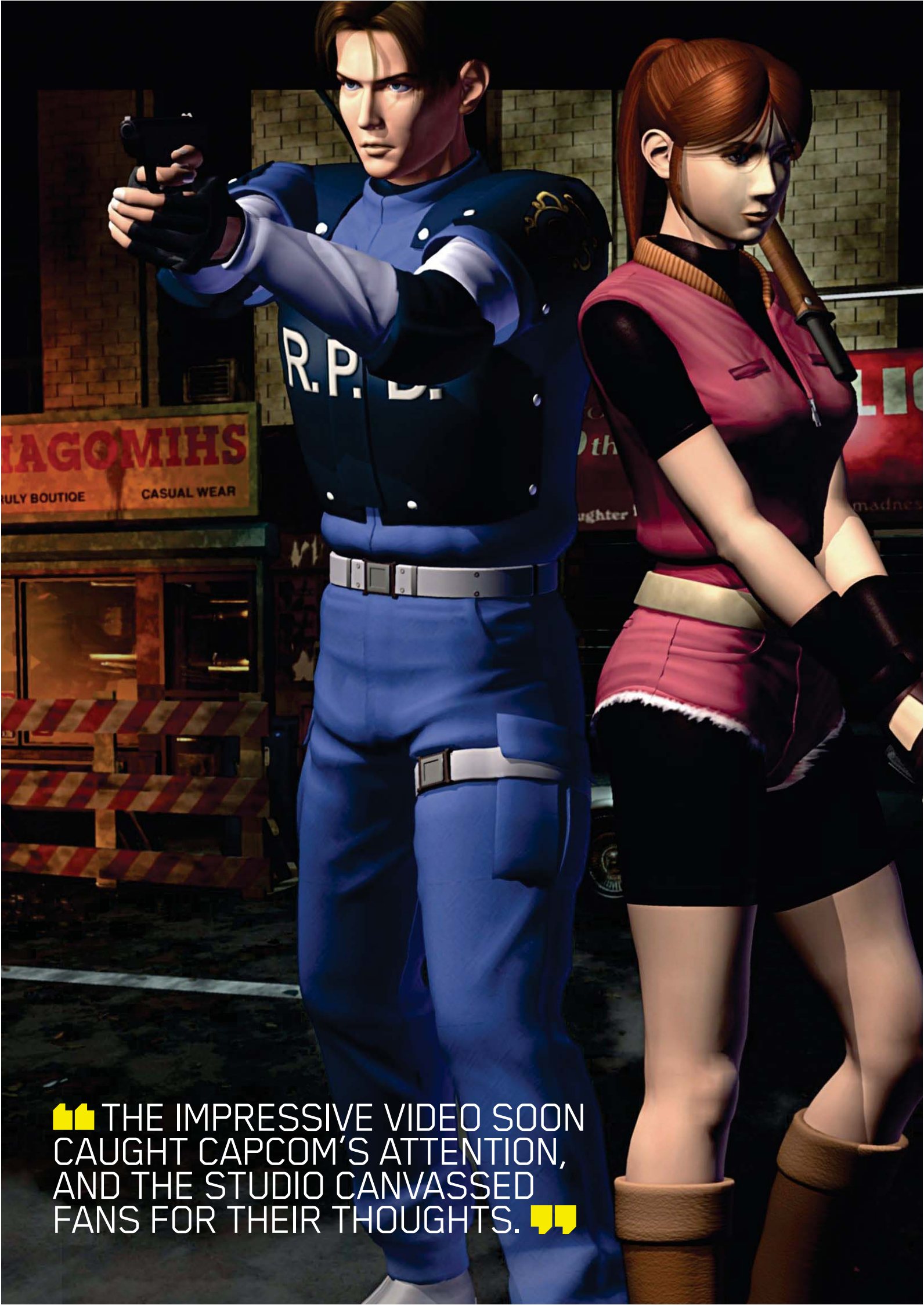
World Of Tanks is – 75 million registered players huge. But why should you join them, and what makes this version the definitive one? "You'll be playing a smooth and fully 1080p game rich with details and eye-popping FX," says Wagner.

"And best of all, free-to-play access to every single PlayStation Network account holder."

PS Plus members get more goodies, such as three days of premium account time, a free tank and extra camo. There will also be access to two exclusive maps – including one that's never hit consoles before.

So, when will it arrive? Wargaming isn't saying just yet, but with the PS4 famously pain-free to work with, and the actual game itself ported to multiple platforms already, the release can't be more than a few short months away.

📱 Treading over yourself to play World Of Tanks? Tweet your thoughts to @OPM_UK.



👍👍 THE IMPRESSIVE VIDEO SOON
CAUGHT CAPCOM'S ATTENTION,
AND THE STUDIO CANVASSED
FANS FOR THEIR THOUGHTS. 🗨️🗨️

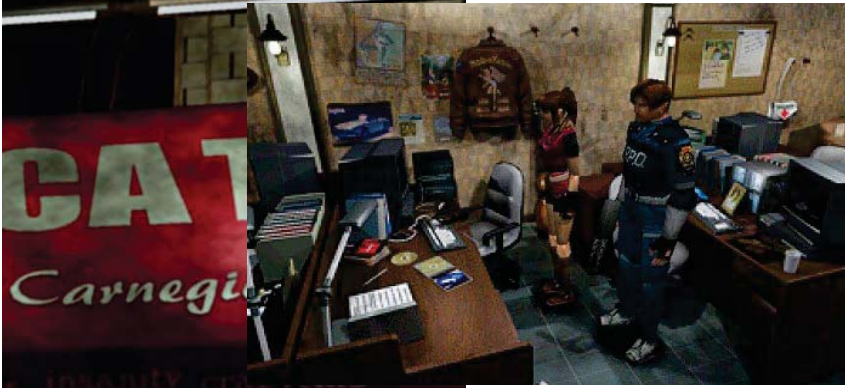
MORE THAN ZERO

Hot on the heels of the Resi HD Remaster, Capcom is bringing Resident Evil 0 to PlayStation for the first time early next year. The prequel will be enhanced with fresh art and friendlier controls.

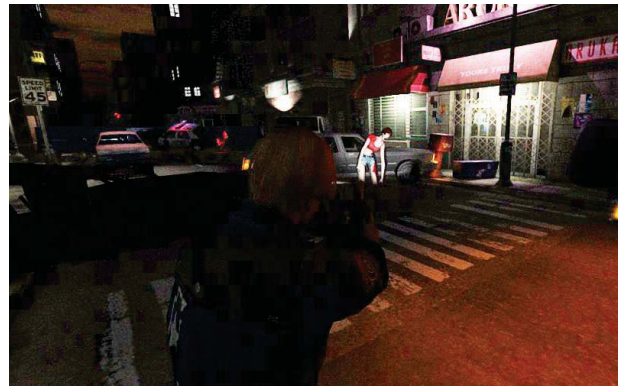


The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



■ A reminder of the original game. We can't wait to see this desk in HD.



■ Did Resident Evil 2: Reborn inspire Capcom to greenlight an official remake? It certainly seems that way.

Resi 2 returning from the dead

Capcom announces remake; fan effort is axed

04

While the original Resi has been remade more times than the Tyrant has been battered by a rocket launcher, its poor old sequel hasn't been touched by Capcom in years. Until now, that is.

Most people's favourite 'classic' Resi is getting a do-over. But will it be (as expected) a pre-rendered makeover à la Resident Evil HD Remaster, or an over-the-shoulder affair more like Resi 4? Capcom has said that as it's "Just starting its development cycle, we unfortunately don't have any additional information to share at this time," but that it is keen to hear your thoughts.

This story began when footage of Resident Evil 2: Reborn – a fan-made remake that was going for an over-the-shoulder approach – appeared online. The impressive video soon attracted Capcom's attention, and the studio canvassed fans on Facebook for their thoughts

on the project and on the idea of a remake. Predictably, the fans spoke in huge numbers. Daniel Gasparini, for instance, wants it "In the same vein as REMake: fixed camera angles with pre-rendered visuals. No over the top action, but lift from [the aborted] Resident Evil 1.5 to expand the game."

on the project and on the idea of a remake. Predictably, the fans spoke in huge numbers. Daniel Gasparini, for instance, wants it "In the same vein as REMake: fixed camera angles with pre-rendered visuals. No over the top action, but lift from [the aborted] Resident Evil 1.5 to expand the game."

REBORN TO DIE

A surprising number of people took the chance to request a Resident Evil 2 and 3 two-in-one remake bundle. Michael Dietz, meanwhile, is after something grander still: "I would say remake it into style of Resident Evil 4 with a little more action and a little less puzzles."

As for that fan remake, it's been cancelled. The team were asked to stop development by Capcom, but they have been asked to help with the official remake in some capacity. "They have invited us to a meeting to discuss further ideas," the project leads announced, mysteriously.

★ For more on Resident Evil 2, check out our 20 Years Of PlayStation magazine.



the big shot

eagle-eyed analysis

This robo brawler is Wheeljack, one of the many Autobots who transforms into a shiny car.

Platinum does the best combat in the business, so we have unreasonably high hopes for this.

Each character has their own varied moveset, incorporating their unique transformations.



number game
we do the maths

1995

The year PlayStation released in Europe on what we now call P-Day.

480p

The console's practically prehistoric maximum resolution.

10,850,000

PlayStation's biggest success, Gran Turismo, sold this many units.

299

How much, in pound sterling, the original PlayStation cost at launch.

#6

MGS1 was the highest ranking PS1 game in your Top 100 list in OPM #100.

2206

The MB you'll need to store Tokimeki Memorial II, the largest PS1 PSN title.

102.49

The number of people – in millions – who owned the first PlayStation.

2006

The year when Sony finally ceased production on games for PS1.

This looks like Runabout, a nasty car Decepticon who first appeared in issue #23 of the Marvel comic series.

Earth is basically a big battleground for spectacular robot fights. We're totally cool with that.

Transformers drops the Bay

Robo beat-'em-up goes full retro

05

When Platinum is good, it's very very good and, so far at least, Transformers: Devastation is shaping up to be more Metal Gear Rising than The Legend Of Korra. It's a proper Transformers game, meaning Michael Bay hasn't been allowed anywhere near it and also that it's based on the classic animated show from the '80s and '90s, rather than Bay's boreflicks.

Given that the Autobots and Decepticons spend quite a lot of

time bickering, this is primarily a game about robots walloping the hell out of each other. Playing as Optimus Prime, Bumblebee, dinobot Grimlock and friends, you'll bring the fight to Megatron and other baddies in a range of vibrant cartoon locales.

It's just missed our review cut-off, but the fighting is fast, kinetic and gloriously over-the-top, so don't be shocked if it's the talk of social media this month.

★ Check back next issue for our Transformers: Devastation review.

If you grew bored of AW's frequent mid-air shootouts, you'll enjoy traversal tweaks here.



OPM's back in Black (Ops)

BLOPS III's Beta wows us all on the new home of COD

06

As if you were in any doubt about PS4's dominance this generation, Activision's deal with Sony to release the Beta for Call Of Duty: Black Ops III on our home turf over a week before Xbox One – the first time a COD Beta's appeared on PlayStation, stretching back to 2008's World At War – tells you all you need to know. With three maps and seven modes on offer, we couldn't resist donning our gobby teenager-proof armour to see how multiplayer's shaping up.

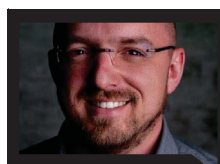
Thematically there isn't a huge shift between this and 2014's Advanced Warfare, so once again

👉 **BLOPS III'S TRAVERSAL IS LESS SHOWY, BUT MUCH MORE PRECISE.** 🗨️

the weaponry's infused with sci-fi invention. Explosive longbows, mines filled with nano-drones, and the ability to 'glitch' back to a previous position – these are the tools of Black Ops III's trade. Although no amount of levelling up will unlock all those abilities for a single character.

Instead, the really high-powered weaponry and gadgetry is doled out between Specialists, each with their own distinct style and voice. If you have eyes on that bow (and judging by the

Beta, 98% of you do) you'll need to play as hooded femme fatale Outrider, who also gets a Vision Pulse ability to reveal nearby enemies. At first this Specialist system gives the impression COD



dev talk


"Is it intimidating for someone starting Call Of Duty fresh? I hope not. We were worried about how quickly people would adapt to what this game was trying to do, and the answer was that they adapted pretty quick... I don't think it's intimidating, but I'm aware you'll be more successful if you help somebody [else] out."

David Vonderhaar
Studio design director,
Treyarch

might have gone class-based, but in execution it's much subtler than that, offering a bit more depth to character customisation than the classic 'Pick 10' system allows.

PICK OF THE BLOPS

Seduced by the prospect of skewering unruly ruffians with a future-bow, we pick Outrider and dive headlong into a simple team deathmatch round in one of the Beta's three maps, Hunted. It's well-suited to a 6v6 engagement, offering three pathways between opposing spawn points, a pretty little water feature, and plenty of opportunities to test out Treyarch's newly improved traversal controls.

As in Advanced Warfare, you're able to extend your jump by holding down , but the reduced duration and increased speed of your augmented jump leads to a much

The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

PAINT IT BLACK

Always dreamed of painting your assault rifle prosthetic-limb beige? Thanks to the Weapon Paintshop, a whole world of obnoxious colour schemes lie before you.



■ Ah, the wet stuff. Looks pretty, offers certain death and little dignity.

precise. Oh, and you can swim now. Never, ever try it in a multiplayer match if you like staying alive.

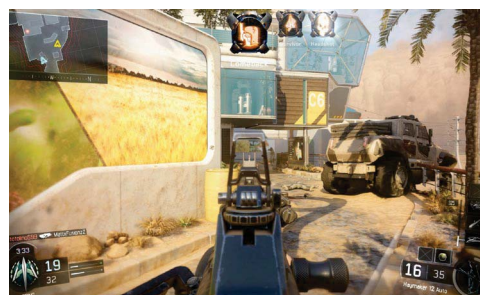
The team deathmatch verdict? Well, aside from those traversal tweaks it feels like COD – still twitchy, still focused on running about with abandon, and still subject to odd and infuriating team balance issues. Well, it is a Beta. Maybe they'll fix all that before release this time.

IN COD WE TRUST

We're far happier about the return of team favourites Demolition and Search And Destroy. Here, Call Of Duty meets Counter Strike: one team defends a pair of checkpoints, and the other must blow them up. If you're not in the know, in Demolition you're free to charge about like an idiot spraying bullets, but cark it in Search And Destroy and that's it for the round. COD is always accused of being just a run-and-gunner, but in reality it's much more these days.

Still, the Beta suggests a rather safe evolution of COD multiplayer from Treyarch on the whole. But such is the quality, it's renewed our interest in shooting strangers in the kneecaps for another year.

★ Pick up next month's mag on 23 Oct for plenty more on Call Of Duty: Black Ops III.



■ Whatever the changes, COD's gunplay fundamentals are rock solid.

info patches update your brain



FROM PARIS WITH LOVE

Pah! Only squares go to Gamescom. Want real hot, steamy PS4 action? Then set your clocks for Tuesday 27 Oct: the day of Sony's Paris Games Week PlayStation conference. Hopefully Sony will make up for skipping the Cologne event by showing us David Cage's new game. Hey, it's Paris; it'd be rude not to.



EDITING IT OUT

Hold on to your criminal butts: the Rockstar Editor should be available in GTA V on PS4 riight... now! The brilliant video editor (which lets you save clips, then provides you with the tools to help make your own movies) was previously only on PC. It means Rockstar's Editor Contests are now open to PS4 players.



YOU BETA BELIEVE IT

Sony has launched a new Beta program to allow gamers to test the latest PS4 firmware before it's officially released. The Beta opened 2 Sep, and those who signed up can put the functionality of new system updates through their paces early. Look out for future sign-ups at: psnbeta.eu.playstation.com.

less floaty feeling, and far fewer airborne engagements. This will be most keenly felt in Uplink mode, which you'll remember as COD's CTF/basketball crossbreed. Sadly that mode isn't included in the Beta so we're not able to test our hunch.

In addition, you're now able to wall-run simply by making contact with a vertical surface while airborne. You'll 'snap' onto that surface until jumping off it in the opposite direction, or until you lose momentum and your arc diminishes.

We liked Advanced Warfare's jetpacks and the potential it allowed to double back on opponents like Baron Von Smartarse, but it did have a slight tendency to send you into an action you didn't intend, leaving you vulnerable while you flap about in mid-air trying to regain your composure. Black Ops III's traversal is less showy, but markedly more

Attack On PlayStation!

Colossal anime gets a PS-exclusive tie-in

07

Attack On Titan is becoming nothing short of a phenomenon, and if you've ever seen the anime or read the manga you'll know why. It's set in a post-apocalyptic world, after civilisation has mostly been eaten by enormous monsters: skyscraper-sized humanoid creatures who are determined to wipe us ants off the map. Humanity hunkers down in cities protected by massive walls, with acrobatic soldiers zipping and flying around to defend us from the worst.

We'll be playing as some of these soldiers in the newly announced Attack On Titan game, stomping its way exclusively to PS4, PS3 and PS Vita. It covers the anime's 2013 season, meaning we'll be playing as central characters including Eren, Mikasa and Armin throughout the main adventure.

As Dynasty Warriors studio Omega Force is handling development duties, your first

thoughts might be to expect a Titan-themed Warriors clone in the style of Dragon Quest Heroes, but it's looking like AOT will be much truer to the show. That means we can expect plenty of sky-based encounters that will see you darting through the air as you try to take down the 'unkillable' behemoths who are terrorising your neighbourhood.

EXPECT THE ENVIRONMENT TO CRUMBLE AND SHATTER AROUND YOU.

MONSTER MASH

Titans can only be defeated by first hacking away at their limbs, immobilising them so that you can clamber up and pierce the weak

points on their necks. Expect the environment to crumble and shatter around you as you do so – killing titans is messy business...

AOT will be unleashed upon Japan this winter, but start prepping your 3DMG's gas canisters: a Western release has already been confirmed for 2016.

✱ While we wait, head to Netflix on PS4 to watch this amazing anime's first season.

Fan of Armin and company already? Then you'll know this one's going to be very bloody...

the rumour machine

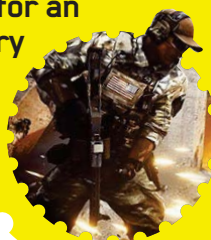
our sources understand...



A Dead Island: Definitive Edition – from Dying Light developer Techland – might be coming to PS4 later this year. Great news for lovers of dead people who won't lie still.



Box art has appeared for an Anniversary Edition of Back To The Future.



EA says there's a new Battlefield coming next year. Will it be the long-awaited Battlefield 5?



Now that they've polished off Final Fantasy X and X-2, it seems Square Enix might be remastering FFXII next.



CRASH AND BURN

Own these? You might be sitting on a goldmine... "I found how sought-after some of the older games were," Charlie says. "PS1 titles like Spyro, Crash Bandicoot and Silent Hill were expensive."

99 great games and The Simpsons: Hit & Run...

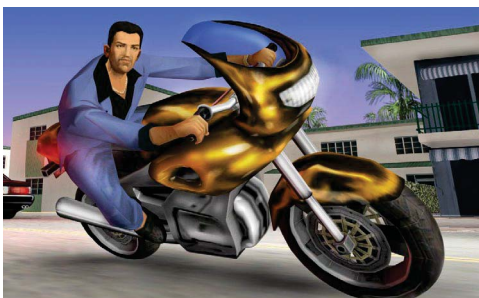


Top 100 games are Large and in charge

Reader collects your top games from OPM #100

08

Our reader-voted 100 Greatest Games feature in our hundredth issue meant different things to different people: gospel, dinner napkin, the cause of several breakups, you name it. For reader Charlie Large, however, it proved inspirational, because one year on he's bought every title on the list. Yup. Every. Single. One.



You voted The Last Of Us number one. Charlie chose Vice City. Both strong picks.

To discover more we spoke to the man himself. "It set me off on a mission to find games that I was missing (repurchasing a lot as I had traded a lot of them in to help fund my PS4), which included eBay wars, car-boot hunting and even donations to the cause from an awesome Facebook community called the Squiggly Gamers." And the price? Charlie set aside around £40 each month for it, with the total cost coming to an estimated £550. "Not bad," he says, although we bet his fiancée disagrees.

As for his favourite game? "If I had to choose, I'd say GTA: Vice City. It's because of how amazing it felt to be driving through a pastel-hued Miami at night whilst listening to Michael Jackson." Charlie, we salute your commitment to bringing OPM #100's historic list to life. Now, can we borrow your copy of FFXIX?

* Want to congratulate Charlie on the collection? Tweet to @CharlieLarge.

PlayStation voices

the month in mouthing off

"The **Ⓢ** and **ⓧ** represent 'yes' or 'no' decision-making." **Teiyu Goto**, the hallowed designer of PS1's pad, explains button layouts.



"When I saw the specs, I found myself shaking." **Hideo Kojima** was just a little excited when he found out about PS1's power, just before making MGS 1.



"From day one on PS1, I started thinking what I would do to make sure PS2 won round two." Ex-SCEE boss **Chris Deering** was always a step ahead.





instant opinion

strong vs
wrong

CULT CLASSICS

Game announcements EVERYWHERE! Brill B-Movie bug-hunt Earth Defense Force 4.1 is coming to Europe soon, while ace PC indie This War Of Mine will make its way to PS4 in 2016.

THE CRUNCH BUNCH

At long last, excellent streaming service Crunchyroll has arrived on PS4 and PS Vita, letting us watch some of our favourite anime on PlayStation.

BET ON DUKE

Gearbox and Interceptor's legal tussle over the Duke Nukem rights ended in Gearbox's favour. Will they celebrate with a new Duke? If so, can it please be good?

TWITCH HUNT

Twitch viewers are trying to mass-play a game of Dark Souls via a voting process. After a bad start, they're making progress thanks to a hacked-in pause function.

DEAD ON ARRIVAL

Grotty beach volleyball sequel Dead Or Alive Xtreme 3 has been announced for PS4 and PS Vita. It'll be the first in the series to hit PlayStation. Er... yay?

OUYE DARE YOU

The 'Ouye' is being crowdfunded over in China – a cheap Android console with a design ripping off the PS4 AND Xbox One. The shame.



As long as the farming systems are deep enough, the game's flat looks will hardly matter.

A brand new combine harvester

Live off the land, then chop it down with new sims

09

When we first learned of the existence of a new farming game, we assumed Bungie had stealth-released a Destiny sequel. Turns out Professional Farmer 2016 is an honest-to-God farming sim that gives you control over a bunch of shiny tractors. You'll rake, you'll hoe, you'll laugh, you'll cry – especially when you open this on your birthday instead of Metal Gear Solid V.

It's easy, and enjoyable, to poke fun at niche games such as this, but it is good to see publishers catering to alternative

interests. Pro Farmer, from Bandai Namco, no less, gives you a garage, a selection of licensed tractors, and a supposedly huge world to cultivate. Digging a little deeper, they say its career mode will span the seasons, with "dynamic field management" depending on the grain used. It's out on PS4 and PS3 on 30 October.

But that's not the only simulation headed our way this autumn/winter. A sister title is the predictably named Professional Lumberjack 2016, a game that proudly asks you to get wood.

You're in charge of a sawmill in this one, meaning you'll need to manage a crew of probably (and hopefully) bearded cutters in

plaid shirts. You'll put your extensive knowledge of trees and woodcutting equipment to good use, with the overall aim being to expand your empire. Can you varnish your company with success, and keep your business from being axed? You have until 13 November to think of more puns, as that's when PL2016 releases, again for PS4 and PS3.

“IT'S A GAME THAT PROUDLY ASKS YOU TO GET WOOD.”



Phew! Made it through without a Monty Python lumberjack reference.

★ Can't wait? There's always Farming Sim 15, which scored 4/10 in issue 112...





20 YEARS OF GOLD

What's your favourite PlayStation memory? We asked you that very question on our Facebook page, and you answered! Check out your own feature on p76 to see if your moment made it...

The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

10

just one more question...
the team debate this month's burning issue

What's your favourite ever PlayStation memory and why?



MILFORD COPPOCK
MANAGING ART EDITOR



I TOOK OUT A STUDENT LOAN FOR A PS1... AND I REGRET NOTHING!

Yes, that's right. I took out a student loan to buy an imported PlayStation and a copy of Ridge Racer for the eye-watering sum of £729 back in 1994. And boy, was it worth it! Well, it was until I ran out of money and had to sell it again six months later, but what a glorious six months we had together! Speeding around Ridge City taking in the waterfall, cruising along the seafront, drifting through the hairpin, ogling Reiko Nagase's pixelated form... They were heady times, and I played the hell out of Race Mode, Time Trial, Mirror and Reverse mode. Hell, believe it or not I even got pretty damn good at Galaga. It was worth not eating for a week...



MATTHEW PELLETT
EDITOR



CAPTAIN ASH'S FIRST FEW SECONDS IN EGYPT'S TOMB LEVEL WAS A WATERSHED MOMENT ON PS2.

I've too many happy PS1 memories to count (Gran Turismo Special Stage Route 11 - we had fun, didn't we?), but my #1 moment involves its successor. When I was 14 years old I got a job working in a garden centre (on less than £1.50 an hour!) to save up for a PS2. On 1 Dec 2000, one week after launch, my carbon paper pre-order form came good and I became a proud owner of the super-console and TimeSplitters. Robofish and friends were great buddies, but that opening desert level was a jaw-droppingly beautiful next-gen moment that put PS1's power to shame. Worth every penny.



DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN
PRODUCTION EDITOR



BECOMING ONE WITH TEKKEN 2'S HUGE ROSTER WAS MY NIRVANA.

Of course, my favourite PlayStation memory is related to Tekken. Back in 1997, when I was a precocious, red-faced youth, I'd become obsessed with a Tekken 2 cabinet in the local arcade. So obsessed, in fact, that I weeded every single garden and washed every car in the area just so I could afford a copy for PS1. Oh, did I mention I didn't actually own a grey box of wonder? So I borrowed a rich kid friend's console for the summer and played the disc so much I eventually wrecked it. But that PS1 loading theme and the adrenaline of pulling off the perfect juggle unified into one PlayStation-flavoured love-in...



DAVE MEIKLEHAM
NEWS EDITOR



JOURNEY SHOWED ME A KINDNESS I'VE NEVER SEEN IN 20-ODD YEARS.

Now bear with me here, but my fave PlayStation moment happened four days before I sat down to write this. See why my office nickname is 'Fickleham'? Anyhoo, I jumped into the PS4 version of Journey hoping to make a few trophies ping. What followed was incredible. So, I come across another player in the Bridge chapter under, well, a sodding great bridge. Over the next two hours, he proceeds to patiently help me collect every ancient glyph and glowing symbol, while shepherding me to specific points to get other trophies. It's the most humbling act of player kindness I've seen in 25 years of gaming.

PLAYSTATION®4 GAMES CALENDAR 2015/16

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON PS4.

SEPTEMBER



SEP
11

SEP 1	METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN	OUT NOW
SEP 1	MAD MAX	OUT NOW
SEP 11	TEARAWAY UNFOLDED	OUT NOW
SEP 15	DESTINY: THE TAKEN KING	OUT NOW
SEP 24	FIFA 16	OUT NOW
SEP 29	NBA 2K16	
SEP 29	LEGO DIMENSIONS	

OCTOBER



OCT
23

OCT 2	JOURNEY: COLLECTOR'S EDITION	
OCT 6	ROCK BAND 4	
OCT 9	UNCHARTED: THE NATHAN DRAKE COLLECTION	
OCT 23	GUITAR HERO LIVE	
OCT 23	ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE	
OCT 30	WWE 2K16	

NOVEMBER



NOV
19

NOV 5	NEED FOR SPEED	
NOV 6	CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS III	
NOV 10	FALLOUT 4	
NOV 19	STAR WARS™ BATTLEFRONT	

DECEMBER



DEC
1

DEC 1	JUST CAUSE 3	
DEC 1	TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX SIEGE	
DEC 8	HITMAN	

COMING SOON

2015	9 FEB	BATTLEBORN
2016	25 FEB	MIRROR'S EDGE: CATALYST
2016	8 MAR	TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION
2016	18 MAR	UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END
2016	TBA	THE LAST GUARDIAN
2016	TBA	RATCHET & CLANK

2016	TBA	DOOM
2016	TBA	HORIZON: ZERO DAWN
2016	TBA	MASS EFFECT ANDROMEDA
2016	TBA	STREET FIGHTER V
2016	TBA	MAFIA 3
2016	TBA	DISHONORED 2

2016	TBA	DEAD ISLAND 2
2016	TBA	DREAMS
2016	TBA	PERSONA 5
2016	TBA	NO MAN'S SKY

**THIS IS FOR
THE PLAYERS**

#4ThePlayers

VISIT UK.PLAYSTATION.COM/PS4/GAMES
TO FIND OUT MORE AND VIEW
FUTURE RELEASES



OCTOBER 9TH 2015

NAUGHTY DOG

INCLUDES
EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO
UNCHARTED 4
A Thief's End
MULTIPLAYER BETA
WHILE AVAILABLE

DRAKE'S FORTUNE • AMONG THIEVES • DRAKE'S DECEPTION

UNCHARTED

THE NATHAN DRAKE
COLLECTION



REPLIES

F facebook.com/OfficialPlayStationMagazine T @OPM_UK W gamesradar.com/opm E opm@futurenet.com



#114 AC Syndicate and more show why they're better on PlayStation.

Time splitter

I'm part of a Destiny clan, but cannot play very often because of work hours and two young children. I got one character up to Level 31 thanks to my clanmates' help, but up until recently I've not been able to play. So I totally sympathise with Matt P's comment in OPM #113. I enjoy Destiny, but I cannot keep up, so I end up missing out on bits of the game and the best loot. The previews of The Taken King look great, but I just don't know if I will get much value out of it. I'm wondering if I get the new Collector's Edition will it help me to get back into the game? I know it's not

fair for me to buy my way back in, but is it fair that I'm excluded from games because I'm busy?

Mark Howard via email

Collector's Ed or not, the changes that TTK makes to levelling make it much easier slot back in. And if you need more help, give our buddies at Dads Of Destiny a call.

HD happy

A lot of fuss has been made about the recent

trend for HD remakes, but most people forget the biggest argument on the 'pro' side: they're cheap. There's no bargain bucket for a newly launched console, and here in Ireland a new game costs €70-€75 (with this year's FIFA creeping up to €80), which is a lot of money if you're just looking for a fresh game to fill a lazy weekend. An HD remake for €30 is a much better proposition. So I say keep the classic remakes coming, and let's hope HD Vanquish is somewhere near the top of that list.

Pete Wisdom via email

We agree that a low price tag is a given, but is every game deserving of a remaster? Does anyone, in this world or the next, actually want Deadpool on PS4? Hmm.

Retro love

I hear a lot of bitching about the amount of quality games coming our way on PS4. The

IS IT FAIR THAT I'M EXCLUDED FROM CERTAIN GAMES BECAUSE I HAPPEN TO HAVE A BUSY LIFE?

Star letter Rapturous applause

After over 30 years of gaming I wanted to let the world know that, for the first time, I played an entire game in one sitting. And its name? Everybody's Gone To The Rapture. What a great game... or shall I say experience? Because it wasn't so much a game as a walk in the country while building up a story of what had happened leading up to 'the event'. I'm not going to spoil it for anyone either playing or planning to play it, however if you love graphical details and something a bit different then you won't go far wrong with this.

Rob Howard via email

EGTTT is a wonderful, bullet-free palate cleanser and, just like you, we're hoping for more games built around a gentler pace. To toast your good taste, here's a year's free subscription to OPM.

indie game scene is nothing short of amazing on PS Vita, PS3 and PS4. I guess my message is not to be to shortsighted when it comes to games; try games you've never played before and don't be so quick to jump ship on legacy hardware!

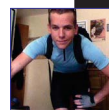
John Jenkins via email

We totally agree. Just because bigger games are passing up PS3 and PS Vita doesn't mean we can't enjoy great indies on these two consoles for many years to come.



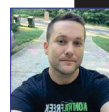
CAN I GET A RT?

Tweet gold (and one troll) from this month's @OPM_UK timeline



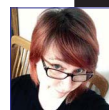
@SAMCOLES2

AC Syndicate won't have multiplayer. It's time to get back to the roots of Assassin's Creed.



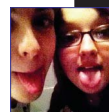
@CHAOSXSILENCER

I am beyond excited for Star Wars Battlefront. It's a great time to be involved in gaming!



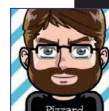
@ASHLEYLYNCH

A friend wants me to go and see Hitman: Agent 47 and I'm begging for another choice.



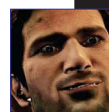
@TENNESSEETANNER

The Taken King is exactly what Destiny should have been from Day One. Regardless, I can't wait.



@ASANCIO

Woah, I'm impressed by PES 2016! PES IS BACK!



@MISLEDPENGUIN

Watching Uncharted 4 on PS4... with a DS4 in my hands... pretending to play it... I need help.



@QUENTINJOVAUGHN

It's gonna be sad when Emma and I have to break up when Fallout 4 arrives.



@LEOGORDONHOWLER

Woah, Dragon Quest XI is a thing! After the non-Western release of X I'm really excited.



@JRDIZON

I have a 100% win record in Street Fighter V. Never playing again. :)



@MAKEROFHORIZONS

Everybody's Gone To The Rapture is a work of art, it's constantly giving me goosebumps! :D

TROLL OF THE MONTH



"Watching 3D movies is a passive experience. Playing a VR game is an active experience. They aren't really comparable."

CORY COGBURN AIMS TO DISPEL THE MYTH THAT VR IS JUST A FAD.



"Brought tears to my eyes, Kojima. You made my childhood."

ALEXANDRE CHAVES LOVES MGS.

READERS' MOST WANTED

Which games are bleeping loudest on your radar?

1/ Uncharted 4: A Thief's End

After playing second fiddle to the Pip-Boy bonanza that is Fallout 4 in last month's Most Wanted poll, Nathan Drake's final adventure plunders its way to the top spot – just in time for a ten-page cover feature (p58) that looks behind the scenes at Naughty Dog's most ambitious project yet.

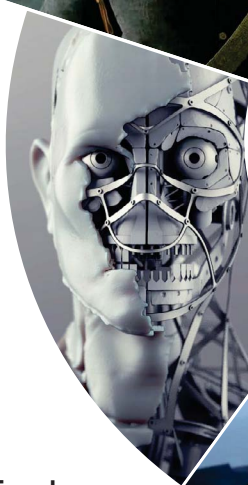
FORMAT PS4
ETA 18 MAR



2/ Fallout 4

The next slice of post-apocalyptic fun from Bethesda is so close we can feel our skin sizzling with excitement. Oh, wait, maybe that's the radiation? Get yourself ready for life after the end times with our A-Z of all things Fallout 4 over on p68.

FORMAT PS4
ETA 10 NOV



VOTE NOW!

Tell us the five games you can't wait to play at opm@futurenet.com.

5/ Assassin's Creed Syndicate

Last month we proved why the latest AC will definitely shine brighter on PS4 than anywhere else. It clearly helped reignite your love for the Creed, with the Frye twins finally making their Most Wanted debut.

FORMAT PS4
ETA 23 OCT



4/ No Man's Sky

Things have gone a little quiet on the NMS front, but you can be sure Sean Murray and the Hello Games team are hard at work crafting one of the most intriguing sci-fi games in recent years. Even with radio silence in effect, you can't wait.

FORMAT PS4
ETA TBC



3/ Star Wars Battlefront

With news that DICE's first Star Wars foray will have an open Beta (featuring Walker Assault on Hoth and a Survival Mission on Tatooine – more info on p6), it's no real shock BF is riding high. Check back on 23 Oct for our Star Wars Special...

FORMAT PS4
ETA 19 NOV



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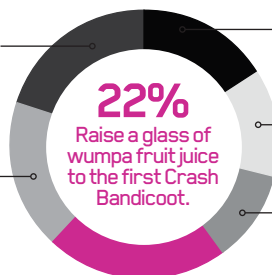
EXIT POLL

Our Facebook fans answer a final question

What game was the biggest factor in PS1's huge success?

20% Are all about the twin pistol dino pacification of the first Tomb Raider.

18% Pledge their fealty to the one true JRPG king: Final Fantasy VII.



16% Reckon a spot of anti-grav racing is in order with the original WipeOut.

13% Think Metal Gear Solid made PS1 what it is.

11% Joyride with nostalgia at the PS1 version of Grand Theft Auto.

NEXT MONTH

To tie into our Star Wars celebration next issue, channel the Force and tell us your favourite Star Wars game on PlayStation...

Steve Jarratt

BACK IN '94, WORD SLITHERED DOWN THE PRE-INTERNET GRAPEVINE THAT SONY WAS LOOKING TO JOIN THE GAMING LANDSCAPE.

And now, after two decades, PlayStation is stronger than ever

Flashback: it's 1993. Or '94. Anyway, I've launched Edge magazine and, given that I have the attention span of a myopic gnat, am now wondering what to do next. After all I must have done six or seven whole issues by now – surely it's time to hand the reins over to someone else while I swan off to do something more 'creatively challenging'? That is, er, 'easy'.

Word slithers through the pre-internet grapevine that Sony is looking to muscle in on the gaming landscape currently dominated by Nintendo and Sega. At some point my deputy editor, Jason Brookes, and myself were invited to Sony's HQ for an exclusive peek at the new console.

Suitably impressed, and always looking for an escape route, I mailed the MD of Future Publishing suggesting that I'd be really keen to do a magazine about this new 'PlayStation' thing. Of course it wasn't as easy as that in reality.

Future, along with several other publishers, was invited to tender for the contract to publish a Sony-sanctioned mag. Fortunately, with Edge still making plenty of waves, we won the gig, and I got to launch The Official PlayStation Magazine.

Like most gamers I was immediately



WRITER BIO

The Official PlayStation Magazine (now known round these 'ere parts as OPM) launch editor Steve Jarratt played a vital role in the origins of the magazine you're holding right now, and 20 years on is still proud to be a member of the PlayStation family.

wowed by the hardware. I'd been a huge SNES fanboy, but was now all about the 3D, which seemed like the logical generational leap.

Over the coming months I got thoroughly addicted to a number of PS1 titles: I stuck at Ridge Racer until I finally beat the black 'Devil' car, which was followed by an unhealthy obsession with X-Com. I even had a PlayStation mouse to play it with. We then we received the glorious Tomb Raider, which, to my great satisfaction, I actually played to completion. I also used to play the

demo level of Destruction Derby that we had on the cover disc of the mag – I don't think I ever had so much play time from a game demo! Other classics followed such as WipEout (looked amazing; I was rubbish at it), Worms (which I actually got my girlfriend to play), and Jumping Flash (which I'd love to see remade on PS4).

LESSONS LEARNED

Naturally the techy geek in me was intrigued by the arrival of PlayStation 2. This looked like a proper generational leap – it even had an Emotion Engine! Despite my loyalty to N64, I only had to see Smuggler's Run on a massive 60-odd-inch TV in the Future offices to know that my technology fetish had to be satisfied.

I duly ran with the aforementioned smugglers followed by SSX, Onimusha, Jak & Daxter, Ico, Rez... but, in spite of these undoubted classics, the console never really grabbed me. Indeed, PS2 has left little lasting impression; I do recall that it was a funny shape and had a blue light.

I have to hand it to Sony: it learned its lessons from PS2 and PS3. Took it long enough, mind, but the company recognised what people wanted and it delivered: the PlayStation 4 is small, powerful and capable.

So far I've completed ACIV: Black Flag, secured Middle-earth in Shadow Of Mordor and spent 110 hours hacking my way through Dragon Age: Inquisition. Right now I'm single-handedly exterminating all life in Kyrat, thanks to the ace Far Cry 4.

It took Sony a few years to get it right, but I'm reconverted and fully back on board the PlayStation train.





Dom Reseigh-Lincoln

■ ■ TWITCH STREAMING AND SCREENSHOT SPREES ARE CHANGING THE WAY WE PLAY WITH OUR CONSOLES. ■ ■

The Share button is the best thing to happen to PlayStation since the original DualShock

Should you be lucky/dumb enough to follow me on Twitter, you'll have probably noticed that I'm a bit of Share button spammer (and then quickly unfollowed me). Screenshots. Gameplay clips. You name it, I've shared it.

Even outside of the many Photo modes developers are now including or patching into their games, there's a growing cult of us who end up scouring the maps of games not to complete objectives, but to nail the perfect shot. Lining up your character in front of the most lustrous of backdrops, seeking out just the right kind of luminescence... It's both maddening and utterly joyous, a permanent micro objective that's never, ever satisfied.

But I'd always shied away from that imposing third option on the Share menu: 'Broadcast gameplay'. *Broadcast? My gameplay? You're 'avin' a laugh ain't ya?* I'd laugh nervously, ever so slightly intimidated by some of the astronomical viewing figures and perpetually hyperactive chat rooms.

But that's just the thing – something as simple as a button on a controller is

coaxing a generation of gamers such as myself out of the insular shadows and into a more social space. Urging us to take pride in the prowess and dexterity we've honed, or just muck about and have fun regardless of how silly we look while we do it. Hell, it took me well over 18 months of PS4 ownership to finally find the guts to select that third option and go live.

SODA STREAM

Starting a gaming stream is nothing short of terrifying, but it's also incredibly liberating. You actively try and play better knowing someone is watching. Interacting with viewers pushes you to sharpen your skills of awareness, responding to comments while still trying to maintain some semblance of visible skill in the game itself.

And yet it's become part of the core of what PS4 offers as a current-gen experience. Beyond the horsepower and capacity there's a PlayStation community that has embraced the new tools at their disposal to inspiring effect. So don't be shy – start hitting that Share button and show the world just how creative and entertaining you can be.

WRITER BIO

Production editor Dom may have bid farewell to the good ship OPM, but you can still find him amassing a small archive of screens on Twitter (@furiarreseigh) or on Twitch (FurianReseigh), where's he definitely not terrible at games.



Tom Sykes

■ ■ WE'VE BEEN GETTING HALF THE EXPERIENCE WITHOUT ALL THOSE GAME-CHANGING MODS. ■ ■

If it wants a bright future, PlayStation will need to become more open to modding

So Fallout 4 is getting mod support on PlayStation 4, and I couldn't be happier. It will be the first in Bethesda's open-world series with a console version equal to the PC game, and while there's bound to be some curation to cut down on the number of penis mods, I'm hopeful that it will lead to a more open development environment further down the line.

I've enjoyed the likes of Just Cause, Skyrim and Fallout 3 on PlayStation 3, but I've looked on enviously at PC players who could make the games look better and fix dumb design decisions via simple downloads. We've been getting half the experience without all of the UI tweaks, rule changes and crazy modifications fans have added over the years.

Take Skyrim's Thomas The Tank Engine mod, which brilliantly replaces its ferocious dragons with a far more terrifying choo-choo train from the island of Sodor. Mods aren't new to that box you keep in front of the TV, of course. We've had level editors for ages, while Unreal Tournament 3's PS3 version

even introduced proper mod support way back in 2007. It didn't catch on then for some reason, but I want developers to keep trying – PlayStation needs to become more open to creative expression if it's to remain on top.

MOD-ERN LIFE

People like to leave their mark on a game; to personalise, create, or tinker with the underlying code, and many of this gen's most successful games have tapped into that.

PC sensation DayZ started life as a mod, and gave birth to a survival subgenre. Minecraft, a game about creative expression first and foremost, is now one of the biggest games in history. LBP proved that, if you give people the tools, they'll use them to make incredible, surprising things. And we could always use a few more of those.

PlayStation is already a lot more open than it was a decade ago, thanks to Twitch integration, non-game apps, and indie publishing deals that smashed the barrier between big and little developers. However, our games need proper mod support if they're to really capture players' imaginations.

WRITER BIO

Contributing writer Tom Sykes has been playing PlayStation since Jumping Flash, and laments the lack of robot rabbit mods for Mirror's Edge. He'll always love mods, thanks to all the broken RPGs fans have turned into playable games.

IN
THE
MOOD
FOR...

Birthdays

Celebrate PS1's 20th anniversary in the UK with PlayStation's best big days

1 METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

The first time you log into one of the Big Shell's nodes, the game asks for your name and date of birth. If your DOB is the same as your PS2's clock, the screen flashes up with a happy birthday message. Awww, you shouldn't have, Koj.

2 ASSASSIN'S CREED II

Ewww. Who decided to replace the fizzy pop at Ezio's party with placenta? Assassin's Creed II doesn't just let you witness the Italian hitman's birthday, it shows you his actual birth. Hell, you even get 'The Birth Of An Assassin' trophy for sitting through the delivery.

3 FALLOUT 3

Humanity may have been all but wiped out by nuclear Armageddon, but who cares when it means you get a Pip-Boy for turning ten? Fallout 3's 'Growing Up Fast' chapter contains one hell of an awkward birthday bash - witness a Mister Handy robot accidentally destroying the cake - but that wrist gizmo is quite the pressie.

4 GTA III

We're cheating a bit with this entry, but explore the seedy

streets of Chinatown in Portland and you can stumble upon this adult clothing store, cutely named 'Birthday Suit'. All those drive-bys we can take, but a play on words about being naked? Too far, GTA. Too far.

5 THE LAST OF US

The impending apocalypse can wait: it's bumps time! TLOU starts in tender fashion, with Joel's daughter giving her unsuspecting pop a watch as a present. Later, as you're exploring the house with Sarah, you come across a dino-themed card, which consoles Joel with the fact he's 'not a relic (yet)'. Ugh. All the sad feels.

6 PORTAL 2

Gaming's most famous dessert totally counts as a birthday cake thanks to that candle. Throughout Valve's puzzler, GLaDOS (Portal's maniacal AI) promises cake. Despite wall scribbles claiming it to be "a lie" the sweet shows up in a late hidden room. We can no longer get through a birthday without a slice of Black Forest gâteau.

7 BEYOND: TWO SOULS

Jodie Holmes just can't fit in during The Party chapter of

Beyond. Regardless of whether you choose to kiss the cute boy or take a swig of hooch, birthday girl! Kirsten becomes irate when Jodie gives her a book of Edgar Allen Poe poems. And when we say 'irate', we mean she locks her under the stairs. We knew we should have got her a PS4.

8 GRAN TURISMO 5

Remember that one kid who turned up to your party and gave you socks? Screw that guy. GT5 is thankfully more generous with the presents. Log into PSN, then fire up Polyphony's racer on your big day, and the game rewards you with a birthday ticket that can be used to bag a car first made the year you were born. Are you a 1985 kid? Here, have a Mazda RX-7. Score!

9 HITMAN: ABSOLUTION

Mental note: don't invite that slaphead assassin to next year's party. During the Death Factory level, 47 can complete a challenge called 'Happy Birthday!', which involves killing a stripper, hiding in a giant cake, then popping out and Point Shooting every guard in the room. That's it: no more party streamers for you, 47!

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Heavy Rain

Early on, Ethan plays with his kid on his birthday. SPOILER TIME: Said kid gets run down soon after. Crappy birthday!

The 3rd Birthday

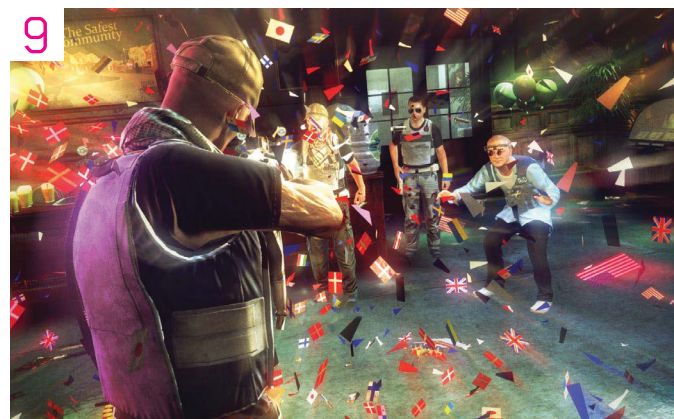
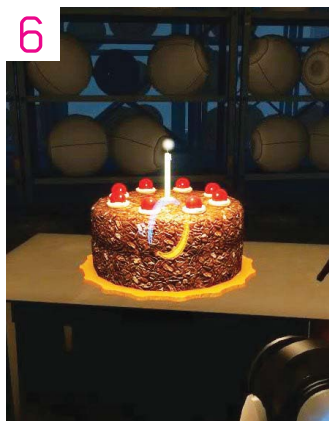
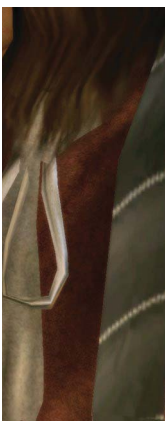
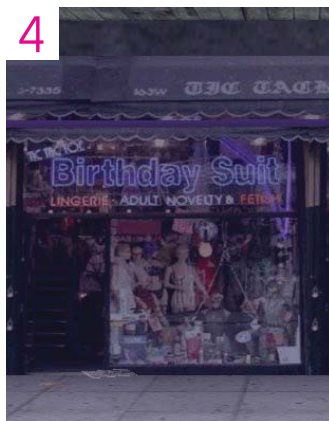
Combine that title with Eve being wished happy birthday after the credits roll and you have a fine honourable mention.

Final Fantasy IX

The cutest FF ever starts with Garnet's 16th birthday party, where a local theatre troupe kidnaps the royal mage.

Did we miss your favourite birthday? Got a brilliant In The Mood For idea? Show and tell at twitter.com/opm_uk.





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PREVIEWS



44 UNRAVEL

No, not a fancy advert for Edinburgh Woollen Mill, but EA's gorgeous new star.


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032

Mafia II's car handling wasn't great. Here's hoping it's an area that sees big improvement...



“CLAY USES A COLOSSAL MAGNUM TO DROP HIS FOES IN STYLE.”

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 2016
PUB 2K GAMES / **DEV** HANGAR 13

MAFIA III

Wiseguy franchise aims to take it nice and Big Easy in sandbox sequel



Is this the coolest game of 2016?

That's what we find ourselves scribbling on our notepad as the first demo of Hangar 13's Deep South sandbox reaches its explosive conclusion. On screen, our new anti-hero is fending off an army of goons using a colossal Magnum to drop his enemies in style, and a grenade launcher to blast oncoming cars; all while Paint It Black by The Rolling Stones blasts out. Moments earlier, our protagonist accelerates his vehicle at a blockade of gangster cars, only to dive out at the last minute and watch as the clash of shattered automobiles creates a fireball that engulfs his enemies. See: 'cool'.

Mafia III has heaps of potential. Set in 1968 New Orleans, it captures the vibe of the era perfectly and follows the story of Lincoln Clay: an ex-soldier seeking revenge against the mob for the killing of his friends. Being a 'Nam veteran, he employs the lethal talents he learned during the war to take down those who wronged him. He starts with the footsoldiers, and works his way up to the boss, Sal Marcano.

CAJUN CLASSIC

What strikes us immediately is just how vibrant and authentic New Orleans feels. Obviously, it's the Hollywoodised version of the city, filled with neon-buzzing jazz bars, revellers spilling out onto the streets, and cops trying not-too-hard to keep the peace. The reveal trailer showed off Clay feeding a



PREVIEW



Left Mafia III has one of the nicest looking cemeteries we've ever seen in a game. There, we said it.

Right Just imagine living in one of those houses. Who would you complain to about this?



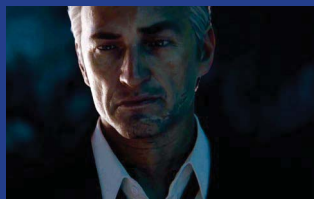
If you could let even one of those innocent bystanders get out of there alive, that'd be just lovely.

Original gangsters

Meet Mafia III's mob bosses



1 As Clay gains more power and influence, he can draft fellow crime bosses into his circle. These figures then act as lieutenants in your empire.



2 What a handsome silver fox. Vito Scaletta returns from Mafia II, with the former playable wiseguy now sporting a few more wrinkles.



3 This here's Cassandra. She's the leader of New Orleans' powerful Haitian gang and the second major ally available in Mafia III who can run properties for you.



4 This mean looking chap is named Burke. He runs a gang of Irish hoodlums. Despite the fab facial hair, we're betting you don't want to get on his wrong side.



Above With its late '60s Deep South setting, Mafia III is a more serious affair than GTA's spin on California and its relentless lampooning.

"MAFIA III LOOKS LIKE A MORE GUIDED EXPERIENCE THAN GTA OR RED DEAD REDEMPTION."



Above Clay sure has a mean streak. And here we were thinking we could hug our problems out.



Above The French Quarter may be pretty, but those impressive explosions have to go off somewhere.

»

mobster to an alligator in a steamy Louisiana swamp, and the first piece of real action in our demo takes place in a classic New Orleans cemetery, filled with mausoleums, ornate statues, flickering candles, and shady characters dealing drugs among the dead. Clay is here to find a dealer who has critical information: the name and location of the club the mob's using as a legitimate front for a drug den.

CLAY THE SMACKDOWN

This section shows off some classic third-person gunplay, and throws in some savage melee takedowns for good measure. And they are indeed savage. Before the shooting starts, Clay walks up to a gangster and cracks his skull open on the nearest wall. Seconds later we see our protagonist stabbing his foes repeatedly with a huge knife.

Inevitably, the shooting does kick off, and Clay leaves the drug dealer's posse in bloody tatters before chasing his target to a car. The guy nearly gets away, but he can't start the engine in time and our hero pushes his way in and starts to drive like a lunatic, threading in between traffic to frighten the dealer. We even get to decide whether we spare his life or shoot him in the head and chuck him out.

Though Mafia III looks like it will be a more guided experience than GTA or Red Dead, its open-

world still gives you options. When Clay decides to infiltrate the drug den, which is hidden beneath a club called Cistern, there are a number of ways to access it. You can opt to go in all guns blazing, terrifying the customers, or you can sneak in through a variety of different entrances. Our demo walks the middle line – Clay sneaks into a side entrance after stabbing the lone guard repeatedly in the face. Yeah, it's definitely that kind of game...

Several sickening takedowns (and a lot more gunplay) later, and Clay has cleared out the Cistern club. The place is torn up with massive bullet gouges and shotgun holes in the furniture, and several members of the public are crouched screaming in the

dark corners. However, now that the mob is gone you can assign the property to one of your allies. One such friend is Vito from Mafia II, and depending on who you hand the business to, you're given special 'perks' which can be used later on.

CENTRAL PERKS

We see one of these perks in action as Clay attempts to outrun the police. Instead of driving around the city until the cops simply give up, Clay breaks line of sight, gets some distance between himself and his pursuers, and dashes to the nearest payphone to call in a favour from his friends. They can cause a distraction, come and help out, or – in this case – pay off the police to abort the chase.

All this is a painfully brief snapshot of Mafia III's rich world. And while elements of the game will feel familiar to anyone who has been criminally intimate with GTA V, much of it is fresh and distinctive. From the look of the city, the things you do, the way people talk, right through to the classic late-'60s rock soundtrack, there's a surprisingly unique atmosphere here that really captures the spirit of the Big Easy. Will it be 2016's coolest game? Maybe. Is it one of the most intriguing and stylishly violent games you'll play next year? Definitely. ■

FACTRICK

1. HEAD DEAD

Clay is just a little pissed off with the mafia. They did shoot him in the head and leave him for dead, after all.

2. SECOND SUN

The song that plays at the end of the reveal trailer is 'House Of The Rising Sun' by The Animals. Moody.

3. HANGAR TIME

Developer Hangar 13 is a brand new studio, and was only opened by 2K in December of last year.

Oh, you suffer from vertigo, do you? Yeaah... that's probably going to be a problem for you in Catalyst.

"OUR LATEST HANDS-ON GIVES A TASTY FLAVOUR OF WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE IN GLASS."

FORMAT PS4 / ETA 26 FEB / PUB EA / DEV DICE

MIRROR'S EDGE CATALYST

Killing time in Faith's well-worn, fragrant kicks



Don't look down. It's a classic piece of advice for anyone who hates heights, but in this instance it means something entirely different. Look down while you're free-running through Mirror's

Edge Catalyst's open-city of Glass, and you will trip, lose speed, fall off a ledge, or just stop. All these things are equally bad, because Faith Connors does things with a speed and grace that's surprisingly tricky to achieve.

Our latest hands-on gives a tasty flavour of what it's like to live in Glass. Focused on a single part of the urban sprawl, our timed demo gives us three objectives to complete at our own pace, along with a bunch of cunningly hidden things to find.

There's a race against the clock over a set circuit, a tower climbing puzzle, and a delivery mission that sees us fighting past armed security forces to get a package to its location. Those grabbable doohickies we mentioned? They're collectibles called Gridleaks, which do... something we'll fully understand in the main game. Hopefully.

Movement in Catalyst is simple and feels very similar to the first Mirror's Edge. We use **△** to jump or ascend, and **□** to duck/slide/descend. **ⓧ** handles context sensitive

actions, such as barging down doors, and **Ⓢ** is our offensive move — more on that in a minute.

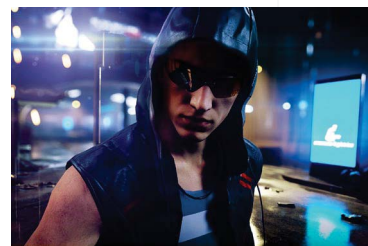
We start our demo with the point-to-point race, and mark the start-line on our mini-map. Once

we've created a waypoint, the game automatically marks scenery with a different colour (yellow) to guide us towards our goal. It's a subtle way of leaving a trail of breadcrumbs, and one that doesn't get too forceful in case we want to discover our own route.

Movement is Mirror's Edge's skill factor — we're supposed to spend hours mastering it. We don't have hours, and instead bumble headlong through the point-to-point race, clocking up a woeful time. There's an instant restart option, which allows us to keep trying, each time tweaking our route to shave seconds off the course. Restart option: we love you.

FAITH OFF

Right, it's time to kick some ass. Combat is Catalyst's strongest suit right now. As we race from one point to the next we tap **Ⓢ** to execute a melee move, and integrating these spectacular kicks and punches into the flow of our movement means that we maintain speed. Chaining it all together, in a perfect sequence of wall-runs, zip-lines, and brutal kicks to the face, feels damn good. However, it's easy to go wrong, to miss a beat and require a restart. So, don't look down, stay focused on the destination, and keep an eye out for Faith next Feb... ■



Above DICE has said there will be multiplayer, including leaderboards and races against ghosts.

FACTRICK

1. PRISON BREAK

The intro to the game sees Faith being released from jail. It sells the idea Glass is a super-oppressive city.

2. RUN BUDDIES

Faith now meets and follows other runners. It makes Catalyst feel less of a solo pursuit than the original.

3. TURN AROUND

As with the original, there's a quick-turn button. You'll need to master it for the tougher runs.

Faith's wall run/jump kick combo is incredibly satisfying. Combat has really evolved.

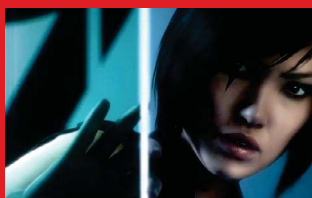


Friend or foe?

Meet Faith's allies and enemies



1 Evil CEO Gabriel Kruger is one of Catalyst's main antagonists. Is it just us, or does old Gabe look *really* like EA CEO Andrew Wilson? Hmm.



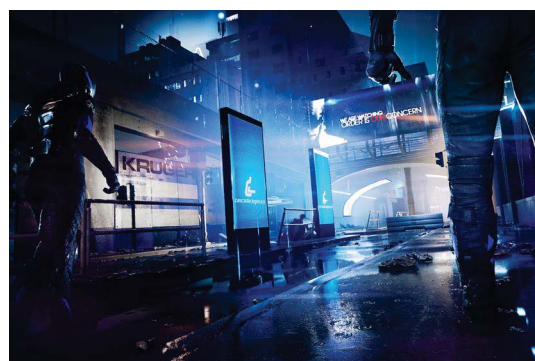
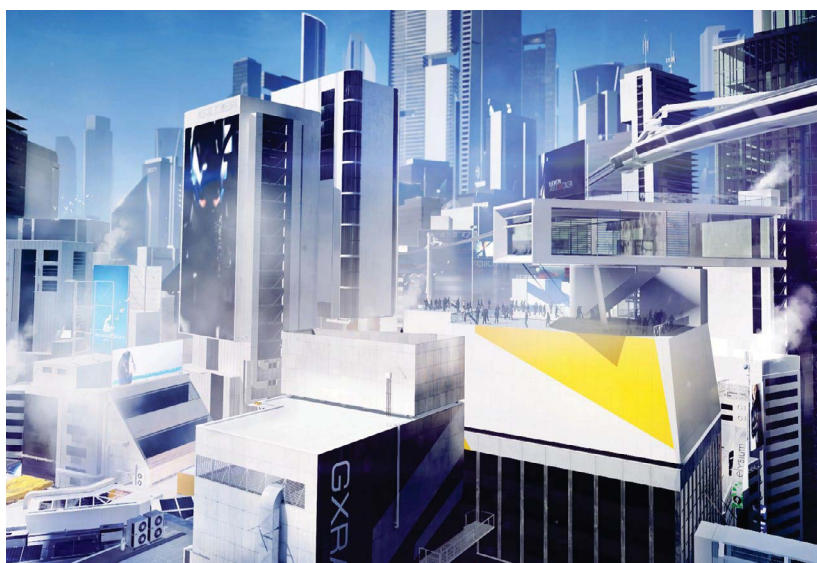
2 Faith's constantly assisted via earpiece by her handler, Noah. The substitute father figure was a friend of Faith's parents before they died.



3 The Conglomerate is the main enemy force in the game. It looks like Kruger has ties to them, too. It's best to mingle in the same dastardly circles...



4 An assassin seen in our most recent demo is trying to steal intel from Kruger. Gabe's badass female security guard takes him out with ease mid-heist.



Left The whole city will be open for you to explore, though our early tutorial area was hemmed in...

Above The opening shows the city at night and soaked in rain – a first for Mirror's Edge's bright world.

"ADAM HAS A DASH MOVE THAT LOOKS VERY SIMILAR TO DISHONORED'S BRILLIANT BLINK."

Human Revolution was the 'cyber-renaissance'. The sequel is the cruel reality of what all that leads to.

FORMAT PS4 / ETA 23 FEB / PUB SQUARE ENIX / DEV EIDOS MONTREAL

DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED

Two sides in the war, far more ways to fight it



"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." So said Arthur C Clarke, presumably after seeing very early alpha footage of Adam Jensen in his second outing. The man with limbs of steel, wardrobe of intense metrosexuality and vocal cords of gravel returns with more augmentations than ever – Eidos Montreal explains that this is to offer more choice within its violent-stealth sandboxes, but we reckon it likes making the guy look like a no-f fooling wizard.

Showing off new runthroughs of the Prague stage we saw at E3, Mankind Divided's most recent demos are all about how it offers techniques that enrich your style of play. Stealth isn't just a case of avoiding all the fun stuff in a level – Jensen's got the tools to make that out-of-the-way journey *itself* fun.

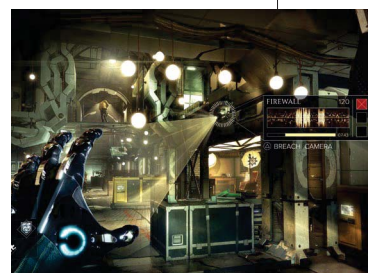
New quick-swap firearm customisation means stealthy play can be achieved by throwing a suppressor onto your pistol or, in what we're taking as a nod to Judge Dredd, swapping to EMP ammo. Jensen also has a 'Gun Arm' – a souped-up version of his celebrated nano-bladed elbows from Human Revolution. Its Tesla attack mode enables you to lock onto multiple enemies and send arcing, silent

missiles that fry foes before they know what's going on. And, in the closest thing to actual magic (by Arthur's standards), Adam has a dash move that looks very similar to Dishonored's brilliant Blink.

IN WITH THE NEW

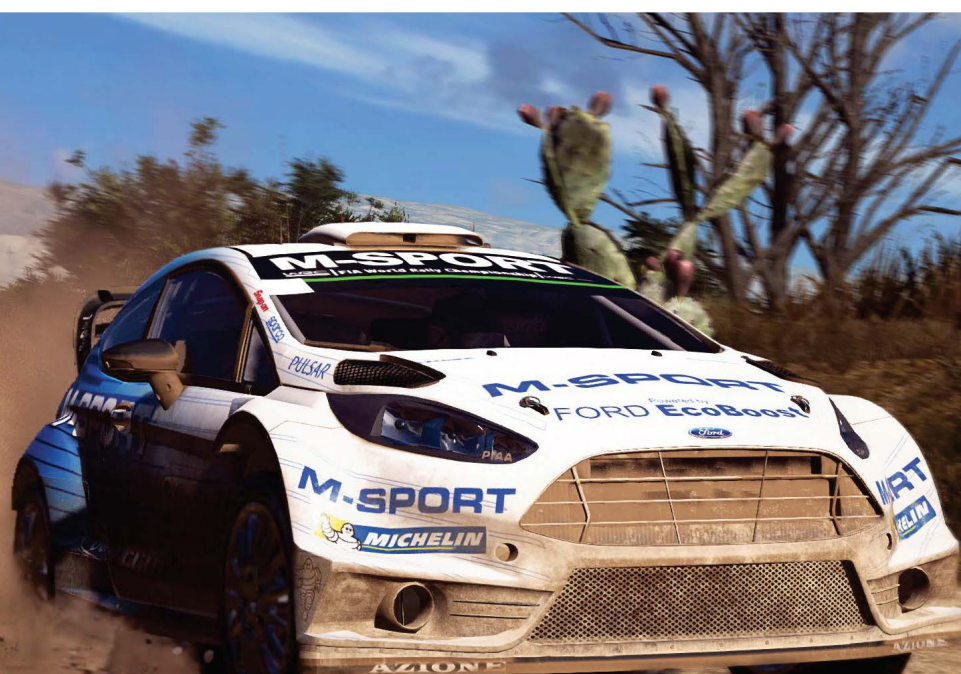
All of that new-found choice means it's more helpful than ever to have a New Game Plus mode. Previously only available in Human Revolution's Director's Cut, this replay tool lets you start the game again with all of your augmentations from the last run.

Producer Olivier Proulx explains that it's all in service of creating a game that lets people experience totally different things within the same framework: "There's a lot of creativity for the player – if you and I play, we'll probably have a lot of different stories about how we approached things." Playing the same game in two entirely different ways? Now that's magic. ■



Above Dicey situations such as these will require Adam to use everything he's got at his disposal to get through successfully.

The elements matter. You'll need to tune your car to account for sand, gravel, mud, snow and tarmac.



"SWEDISH ICE TRACKS FLANKED BY HIGH SNOW BANKS DEMAND CAUTION."



Above Don't forget about light levels (dusk, dawn, noon, night) and weather (rain, sun, cloud).

F FORMAT PS4/PS3 / **ETA** OCT
PUB BIGBEN INTERACTIVE / **DEV** KYLOTONN GAMES

WRC 5: FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Revitalised, come rain or come shine



"Yeah, it's great fun, and captures a lot of the realism of the true sport at the same time." Not our words but those of British rally driver Elfyn Evans after test driving Kylotonn's sim with us. Taking the wheel from Milestone, they're overhauling everything for the series' first go on PS4. New engine, handling model, looks and locations.

Italy, Finland, Spain, Australia, Mexico, Portugal and more contain a clutch of courses and conditions that dramatically affect races. Treacherous Swedish ice tracks flanked by high snow banks demand caution, while grippy Welsh roads let you burn rubber.

It's more accessible than ever, too. A clean new interface enables you to tune towards specific surfaces with a single button press, and a helpful driving school teaches techniques like how to dodge hinkelsteins in Baumholder (oh grow up).

Compared with the likes of Dirt, handling feels lighter and more slippery here, but that's a product of the terrain's truer effects on your ride and not at all an unpleasant one. The revitalised WRC welcomes newbies, challenges veterans, and impresses actual rally drivers. Not a bad start for its PS4 life... ■

Kicking off the career

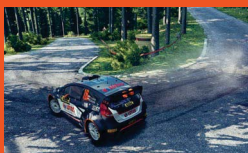
They all want you, but who should you sign for?



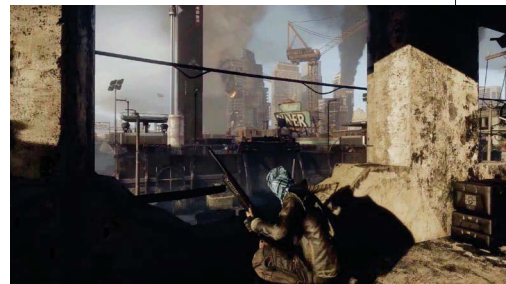
1 Each team has a different mentality, and this alters how you race. Abu Dhabi Racing wants you to be as careful as possible with the car...



2 Kornel Lukacs also wants you to keep the car intact, but to actually, you know, try and win too. You need to balance speed with being sensible.



3 Terry Folb is a bit more of a hot head. Win, he says, no matter what, and repair the car later. If you don't, you'll enter the next stage battered.



FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 2016 / **PUB** DEEP SILVER / **DEV** DAMBUSTER STUDIOS

HOMEFRONT: THE REVOLUTION

Grubby guerrilla fighter rises up to shake the system



It's not been an easy ride for this sombre sandbox. From THQ to Crytek, to Deep Silver's newly named Dambuster Studios, it's been four years in the making and evolved dramatically in the process. Having broken away entirely from the linearity of its predecessor, *Homefront: The Revolution* puts you in the heart of an open-world 2029 Philadelphia; one which is strictly governed by the Greater Korean Republic after a successful invasion of America four years earlier.

Our new demo – the first since #98's cover feature – sees us dropped amid the chaos of Philadelphia in the game's Red Zone. Packed with militia, drones and not a single cheesesteak sandwich vendor, this is a hostile environment where guerrilla fighters – somewhat surprisingly – aren't really made welcome. Smoke billows into the sky from ruined skyscrapers in the distance, and buildings are largely destroyed. The first order of the day is to stop a militia convoy in its tracks by using a handily placed barrel trap on a nearby rooftop. One pull of a lever when the enemy vehicle is in place sends a barrage of explosive barrels their way, and we finish up by gunning down the few survivors.

GUERRILLAS IN THE MIST

Guerrilla warfare is key. The enemy is ludicrously overpowered and the odds really aren't in your favour, meaning this is no simple *Call of Duty*-style FPS. Action takes place in speedy bursts before you quickly retreat to evade enemy fire.

As our demo continues, we take out a few small drones before scarpering and avoiding the watchful beam of a giant enemy drone overhead. While the GKR has technology on its side, we're handed something a little more basic: explosives. *Revolution* happily arms you with Molotov cocktails, firecrackers, and a whole host of craftable diversions.

While your weapons might be crude in comparison with the occupying army's, *Revolution* is all about modifying what you've got. Want

a hologram scope or a silencer? Each individual part can be fully customized, so if you've gathered up the bits – which you can find by exploring the world and unlocking new areas – you can craft your ideal weapon. We arm ourselves with a crossbow, add a laser sight and spend a good five minutes picking off soldiers from a rooftop with ease.

ANTISOCIAL NETWORK

Scattered across the world are Network Transceivers that you must hack to reveal more activities in that area. Sound a bit *Far Cry*? Well, it is. After a Batman-style analogue-stick-wiggling hacking mini-game, your map will pop up with all kinds of new activities to perform in order to win back zones for the rebels. It's now a tried-and-tested mechanic, but fits well in the city environment and there's plenty of variation on the theme of 'you should probably kill these soldiers'.

While it runs on Crytek's CryEngine, *Revolution* doesn't quite have the same popping visuals as Ubi's *Far Cry 4*. From what we've explored so far, Philly's a dull place. Grey clouds loom and the city is brown and dirty. We're promised brighter zones where people live under the rule of the GKR, however, so Dambuster could still be sitting on a world that will hold its own against the shooter competition.

Sure, it all feels very *Far Cry* with more explosions and drones instead of honey badgers, but *Homefront* is no mere clone. Weapon customisation is immediately satisfying and it feels like there's plenty of potential here with the guerrilla combat. Environment variety will be key, but the move to an open-world sandbox still seems like a smart choice for the franchise. ■

FACTRICK

1. TAKE A BIKE

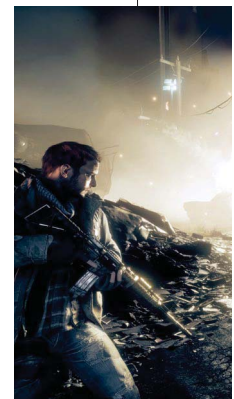
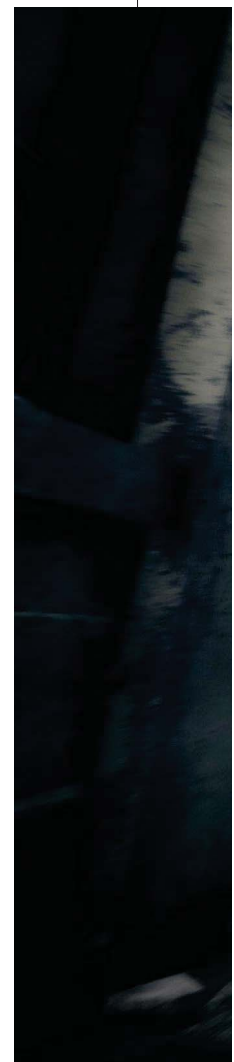
You can make use of multiple motorbikes to zip through Philadelphia's streets at serious speed.

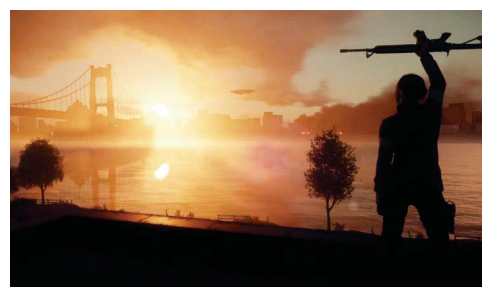
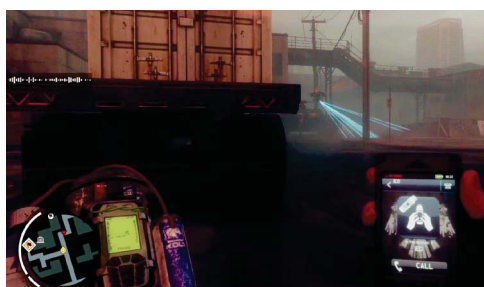
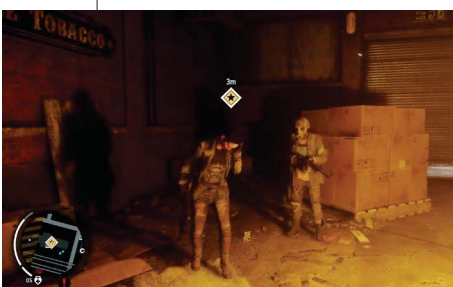
2. BIRDY EYE VIEW

The resistance is led by a woman named Dana, while hero Ethan Brady's nickname is 'Birdy'.

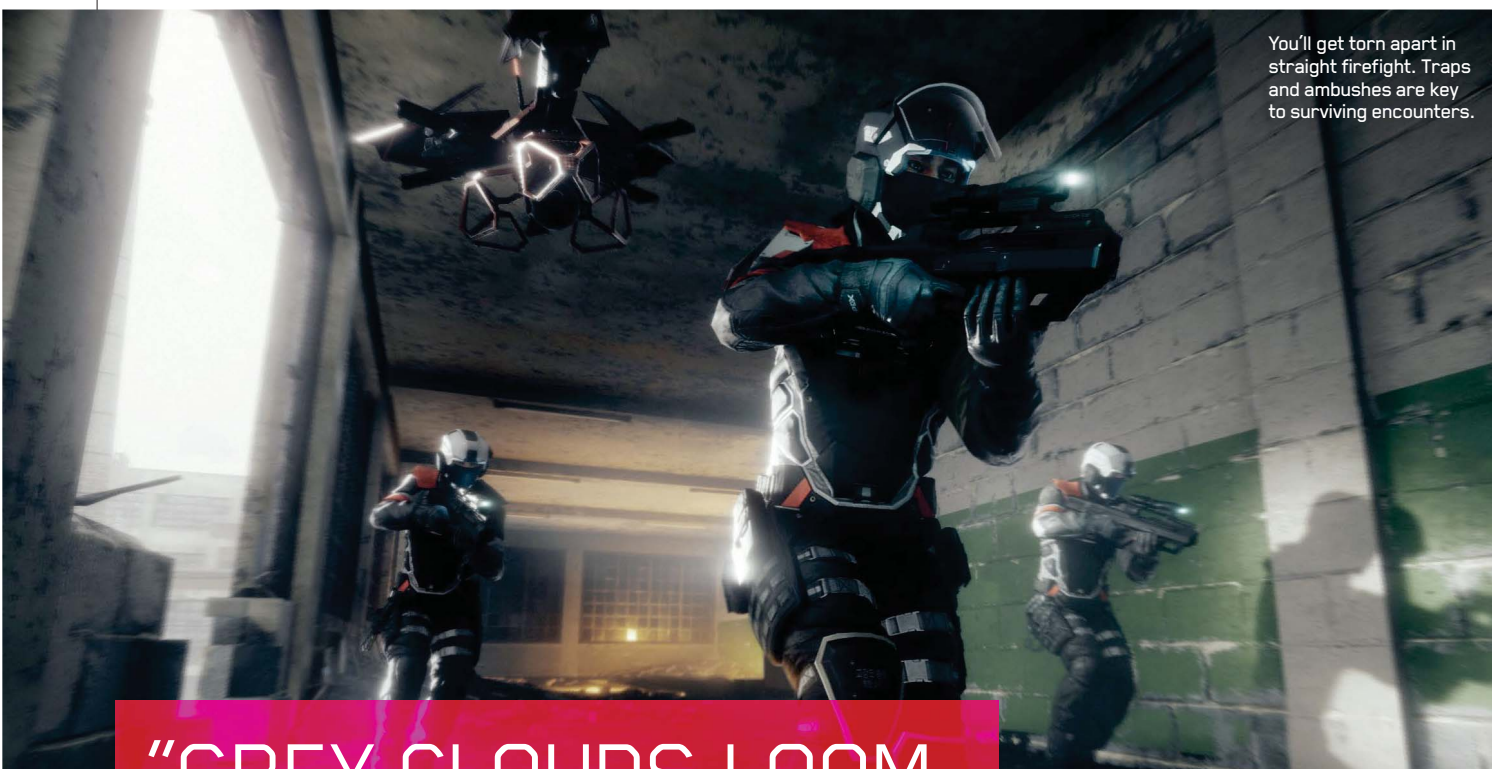
3. RIGHTS OF WAY

Before selling them to Koch Media, Crytek bought the rights to the *Homefront* franchise for \$544,218.





■ Opening up more of the map to reveal enemy strongholds or new weapon caches feels very Far Cry. But hey, if you're going to borrow ideas, you should aim high.



You'll get torn apart in straight firefight. Traps and ambushes are key to surviving encounters.

"GREY CLOUDS LOOM AND THE GAME'S CITY IS BROWN AND DIRTY."

041



Above Weapon customisation plays a big part in Homefront. Expect to see a lot of Philly's arms dealers. Give us a smile, mate.



You've fought Malboros before in previous Final Fantasies, but they've never been this gross.

FORMAT PS4 / ETA TBC 2016 / PUB SQUARE ENIX / DEV SQUARE ENIX

FINAL FANTASY XV

How to make nostalgia out of something brand new



Final Fantasy XV's performing an odd trick — becoming both more and less familiar at exactly the same time.

Episode Duscae, the enormo-demo we saw earlier this year, proved that this was no longer the FF we knew and love/hated, hiding its number-obsessed RPG pedigree under a veneer of gorgeous action, like the chess club kid reinventing himself at a new school.

In the process of moving away from Final Fantasy's long-held traditions, however, XV's inadvertently become part of a wider movement — open-world action-RPGs litter the new-gen release schedule, something director Hajime Tabata acknowledges.

"I think in some ways," he explains, "everyone is heading in the same direction at the moment. Guerrilla Games' Horizon is going a very similar way as well. The idea of having an open-world, seamless travel between areas, having to hunt and fight... I think the technology is now at a place where people can try and achieve these things properly."

STRIKING A BALANCE

It makes for an interesting challenge: how does Square Enix make a game enticing enough for new players, while retaining enough hallmarks of the series it sits within to stay true to its existing fanbase? So far, that seems to be a balancing act of new systems and old motifs — we might be slashing and weapon-swapping at a pace we're more used to from a Platinum game, but the spell names, summons and creatures we're fighting are immediately recognisable to any FF veteran.

In a snippet of new footage, Tabata shows off XV's take on the Malboro, a creature stuck somewhere between Dungeons & Dragons' Beholder and a wilted houseplant, probably most familiar to players from the early sections of Final Fantasy IX. It looks the same, and uses the same poison-belching moveset, but the fighting is totally changed by XV's new, fast-paced swordplay. Tabata sees this kind of duality as key to his game's success.

"People who've played Final Fantasy before will go 'Yeah, I love that monster, that's a Malboro, I've fought them before' and understand what it is. But for people who haven't played it, they'll go 'That's an icky, disgusting creature; a spineless insect-plant monster — that's really cool! It's about having those things that can appeal to both people.' You had us at 'spineless insect-plant monster,'" Mr Tabata. ■



Above Roaming dark dungeons is miles away from the lads getting their Top Gear on.

on
the
box
judged only by
their covers



DRAGON QUEST HEROES

A group of LARPing enthusiasts take their role-playing too far when they wage war on a peaceful tribe of giant, bug-eyed blueberries. A fruit genocide occurs, producing a lot of yummy pies.

FORMAT PS4 ETA 16 OCT



WASTELAND 2: DIRECTOR'S CUT

A Lemmy cosplayer takes it hard when Motorhead's new album bombs. He unleashes a nuke on America in response, then roams the abyss, gunning down any surviving music execs.

FORMAT PS4 ETA 16 OCT



DARKSIDERS II: DEATHINITIVE EDITION

A sentient, rather miffed tribal mask decides to go on a rampage after being left to rot on a shop shelf for Halloween night.

FORMAT PS4 ETA 6 OCT

20th Anniversary

This is for the PlayStation generation.

The original X button bashers. The first Ridge Racers and Raccoon City survivors. The Tekken champions and GT front-runners. This is for those who'll never forget that spine-tingling start-up sound or the thrill of the first DualShock rumble. This is for anyone with a Crash Bandicoot tattoo or a memory card they'll cherish forever. The Chocobo riders and paper dog rappers. The port-switching Solid Snakes, the multitap huddlers and the dance-mat partiers.

This is for those who've led a thousand double lives, loving every second.

This is for your next adventure.



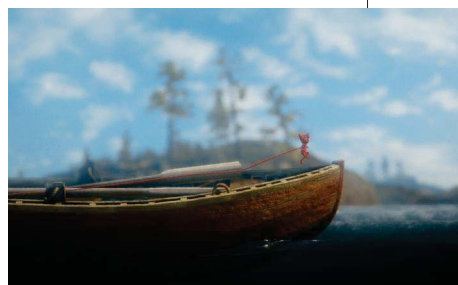
20TH ANNIVERSARY DUALSHOCK®4 | OUT NOW



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PREVIEW

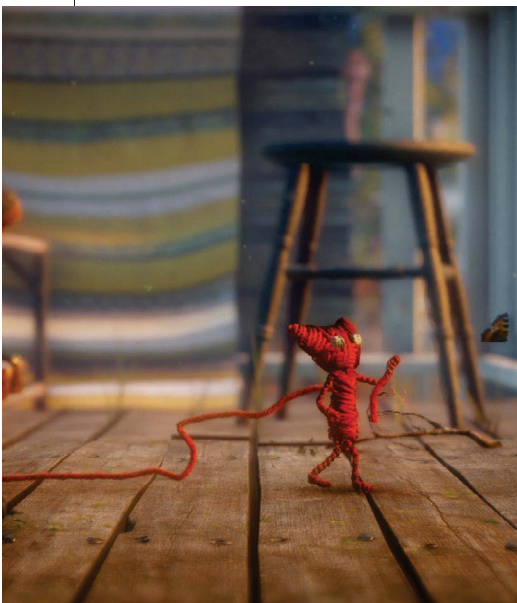


There's a remarkable solidity to Unravel's visual style – you almost feel like you can reach into the screen and pluck Yarny out at any moment. He's soooo cute.

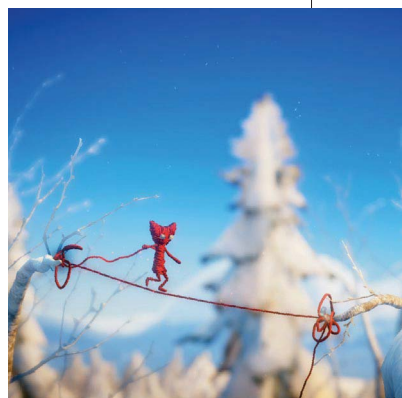
“HURL A YARN LASSO, CREATE A SWING AND CLEAR LARGER JUMPS.”



Apples: the ultimate accessory for today's modern, sentient ball of yarn on the move.



Above The game starts with an old woman fiddling with a picture frame (cutely, of a baby playing with yarn), before switching to our unlikely hero, Yarny.





FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** SPRING 2016 / **PUB** EA / **DEV** COLDWOOD INTERACTIVE

UNRAVEL

Delightful platformer is a real yarn burner



It's the yarn, not loveable hero Yarny, that's the real star of this adorable adventure. It's what makes this wonderfully whimsical platform puzzle game truly unique, and the thing that may save players from the frustrations of the genre. After all, the setting and ambiance of the whole game is so sedate, it simply wouldn't be appropriate to have the person holding the pad to be too tense, would it? Fret not, horribly expensive OLED TV. There'll be no DualShock 4 hurled angrily in your direction this time out.

As Yarny travels through the world (expect to see back gardens filled with old trees, apples and ponds) he leaves a trail of string behind him. Yes, he's literally unravelling as he walks and jumps, and you see him getting skinnier the farther you go. According to the developers, yarn management gets more and more important later in the game – if you can't unravel more, you physically can't progress.

FACTRICK

1. BREAK GROUND

The game's backgrounds are based on the landscape of Umeå, a town located in northern Sweden.

2. A LONG JOURNEY

Unravel runs on Sony's PhyreEngine. It's the engine that powered Gravity Rush, Journey and Hotline Miami.

3. LOVED UP

Creative director Martin Sahlin insists the yarn that makes up our hero represents love.

SPIN ME A YARNY

What that means is you have a trail of string behind you, which is either used to solve puzzles or rewind progress. So, for example, there are fixed points in the environment (such as nails), which allow you to hurl a yarn lasso, create a swing, and clear larger jumps.

You can make bridges by fixing yarn at one point, then threading it to another, letting you move items over gaps or spring up to higher points in the level. The real

key to being great at Unravel is how you string (ahem) all these abilities together.

One example of a puzzle from our latest demo sees Yarny needing to cross a dry pond. It's too far to jump or swing across. There are a bunch of apples nearby, but we can't get them over the lip of the pond into the basin. Instead, we create a string bridge that allows us to shift the fruit. Once all five apples are in the pond, we lasso a water pipe and fill up the bowl. The apples float to the top, creating a bridge, and we're free to walk over it to the other side. We knew all those years of bobbing for Granny Smiths would pay off eventually.

The real beauty, though, is that you can always use your yarn to climb back if you miss a jump or swing. Our hero just grabs the string and hoists himself back to the ledge. It's a neat way of ensuring – if you've climbed all the way up a tree, for example, and missed the last jump – that you don't need to repeat the same puzzles over and over. Take that, unwanted frustration!

Not that you're likely to resent spending much time in Yarny's world. It's a beautiful, natural place to be, where the fiercest enemies are crabs that nip at your string, and the only real natural threat is water. Even if you do take a soaking, the checkpointing is super-generous, and Yarny will appear at the point you last fixed your string to something.

As with all games involving some kind of craft material, Unravel is precision designed to be incredibly cute. At one point, Yarny tumbles down a steep slope, goes head over heels, then rubs his woolly head as he stands back up. He's surprisingly emotive for such a simply designed character. Even when he 'dies,' all you see is the screen getting blurry, so you don't witness Yarny's true distress.

Really, who wants to see an adorable twine-based person perish? Sickos.

MATERIAL WORLD

Sure, Unravel is a game packed with whimsy and natural beauty; a platformer with universal appeal and indie roots. But it's also a smart, polished adventure with the backing of a major publisher and a character that will likely sell a million pieces of cuddly merchandise. If the creators can tie all these threads together, Unravel could be a standout craft platformer (let's face it, LittleBigPlanet 3 is more about the editor than the adventure) that has a constantly credible core inside that fluffy exterior. ■



PREVIEW

Steve Austin's 2K Showcase kicks off with his character-defining win over Jake Roberts at King of the Ring 1996.

046

"CONTEXT-SENSITIVE MOVES AND ANIMATIONS MESH HARMONIOUSLY."

FORMAT PS4/PS3 / **ETA** 30 OCT
PUB 2K GAMES / **DEV** YUKE'S

WWE 2K16

Austin 3:16? WWE 2K16 says,
 "I just recapped your ass"



Think 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin, and snapshots of his Attitude glory days flash through the mind. His on-screen feud with WWE owner Vince McMahon was the quintessential everyman versus establishment tale. Austin's boss-bothering antics, which included filling Vinny Mac's limo with wet cement, and making the pro wrestling mogul wet himself in the middle of the ring on live TV, struck a chord with everyone who had ever dreamed of sticking it to their uppity superiors. (Eat it, suits!)

The Austin/McMahon war catapulted WWE out of the doldrums and back into the mainstream, and in the process made the no-nonsense beer-swilling Stone Cold one of the biggest Superstars of all time. But Austin had an underrated range, having starred for years in WCW as a cocky, bleach-blond jerk, and later in ECW as a fourth-wall breaking malcontent.

Going hands-on with the Texas Rattlesnake's new 2K Showcase mode — the star attraction of WWE 2K16 — it's disappointing to discover that Austin's early career is glossed over in an (admittedly slick) opening video, especially as some of Austin's more-celebrated work was previously recapped in WWE '13. But this is a much more comprehensive chronicle of Austin's later career, with plenty of 'OMG' historical moments we haven't seen in digital form before. And there's none more dramatic than the Showcase's opening act — 23 June, 1996, the day Stone Cold ushered in the Attitude Era.



PREVIEW



Left If you can't stomach Stardust's camp theatrics, you can dart out of the ring and belt him one right in the aisle. Get in!

Right NXT – WWE's 'developmental' league – was loosely featured in WWE 2K15, but this year it has a much larger presence.



Sadly disbanded due to injury, the Cesaro/Kidd combo at least gets another swing at the fences here.



Bigger. Badder. Better.

WWE 2K's feature set has been hitting the gym...



1 There's more personality on show. Dirty Superstars use cheap tactics to get ahead, and slimeballs like Paul Heyman won't hesitate to get involved.



2 2K16 celebrates WWE's renewed focus on tag teams with team entrances and a new system that rewards partners for being in position for the tag.



3 Entrances are slicker – there are no loading times, and it's professionally spliced with crowd shots and interjections from the commentary team.

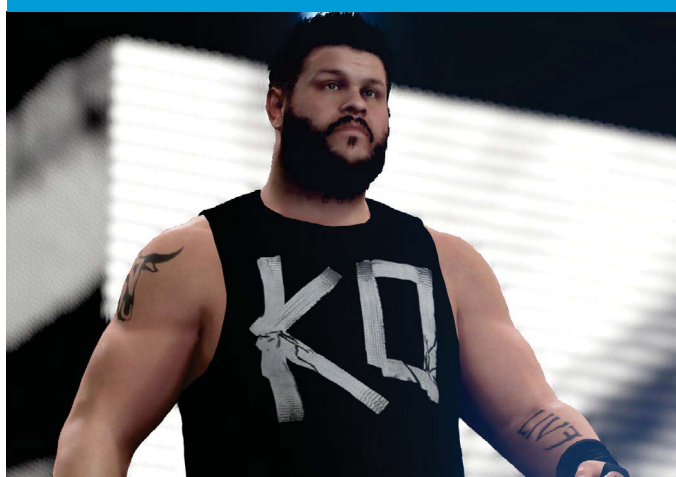


4 In player vs player matches (but not single player), you can interrupt your opponent mid-entrance by running down the aisle and lamping them one. Yes!

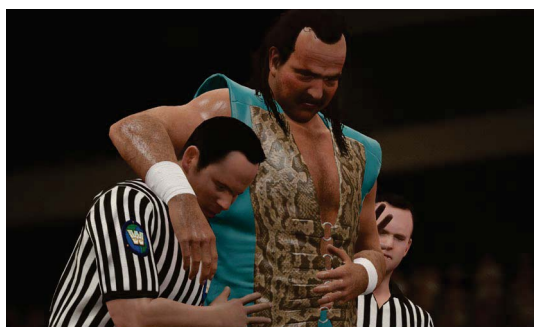


Above The 'Bionic Redneck' delivers his famous speech to Michael 'PS' Hayes, then working as '70s-obsessed commentator, Dok Hendrix.

"THERE'S NO DENYING THAT WWE 2K16 IS THE SMOOTHEST ENTRY IN THE SERIES WE CAN RECALL..."




Above Strong, agile, fast and with great mat fundamentals, Kevin Owens is a complete all-rounder.



Above Roberts replaced Damien with an albino python named Revelations. Should make for some fun post-match antics.

»

Picture it – the final of the King of the Ring tournament, pitting Austin against Jake 'The Snake' Roberts. At this point Roberts, who has never held a WWE title, is in the twilight of his career and his run to the final is painted as a Cinderella story. But on the night, he hobbles down the aisle worse for wear, the victim of a brutal post-match attack from his vanquished semi-final opponent, Vader. Austin for his part doesn't help the situation by viciously assaulting Roberts as he gingerly rolls into the ring.

With Roberts flat on his back as the bell rings, Showcase's opening salvo is the perfect opportunity to experiment with WWE 2K16's tweaks. Pins are now governed by a rotating wheel which tasks you with tapping  when two coloured bars overlap, and resets after each count – triggering teething problems at our hands-on event as we struggle to rewire our brains to the new method. But once it clicks, it's a smart system that lends itself to dramatic last-ditch kick-outs; especially when opponents stack the deck with a dirty pin.

REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY

The biggest and best new change for WWE 2K16? Reversals are now rationed, with dramatic impact on the way matches ebb and flow. Each fighter has a reversals meter that's split into chunks and gradually

refills during the match. A successful reversal depletes one bar, and if you get the timing extra-sweet you can perform a major reversal, which breaks the chain and drains an opponent's stamina at the cost of two meter bars. It stops players spamming reversals, and also serves as an additional point of difference between Superstars.

Technicians such as Tyson Kidd have an eye-popping five reversal bars, making them as difficult to pin down as a lump of soap. Poor old Jake Roberts, however, was always more reliant on street smarts than ring savvy; he only has three bars, and this changes the way you approach the match, necessitating a more aggressive, hit and run style to minimise the risk of getting caught

by a grappler tooled for catch-as-catch-can wrestling.

Other improvements are more subtle, but just as important to the flow of combat. Tightened animations seem an airy point to praise, but there's no denying that WWE 2K16 is the smoothest entry in the series we can recall; moves and exchanges link together with impressive grace and there's none of the immersion-breaking stiltedness of previous games. Gut-bellied gladiator Kevin Owens is the perfect foil to prove this point. A big man with a deceptively vast and athletic arsenal, it's empowering steering this human tank around the ring as context-sensitive moves and animations mesh harmoniously to let you pull off what you want to do, every single time.

Back in 1996, Austin polishes a depleted Roberts off in double-quick time and begins his infamous 'Austin 3:16' speech, kicking off a hellacious half a decade that would change wrestling forever. Austin's high spots wouldn't have had half the energy and drama without the manic tones of Jim Ross calling the action; that's why it's a welcome surprise that Good Ol' JR will come in from the cold for commentary. Want one last shock before this preview's three-count? Seth Rollins' banned curb stomp move makes the cut. Good Gawd almighty! ■

FACTRICK

1. INCREDI ROSTER

With over 120 playable Superstars at launch, this will be the biggest WWE game roster yet.

2. OLD AND NEW

Superstars revealed so far include legends DDP and Lex Luger, and NXT talent Finn Balor and Tyler Breeze.

3. HEY ARNOLD

Possibly the strangest member of the bulbous roster is the Terminator – a pre-order exclusive.

PREVIEW ROUND-UP

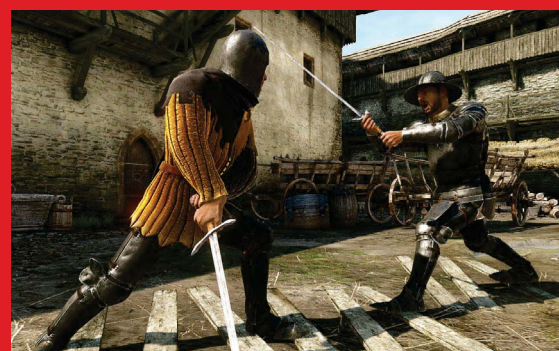
Destruction features heavily in this month's round-up, but we've also uncovered a bunch of exciting new games. Be a goblin in Hob, drive on the ceiling in GRIP, and slice yourself into salami with Team Meat's classic...



FLATOUT 4: TOTAL INSANITY

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 2016
PUB STRATEGY FIRST
DEV KYLOTONN GAMES

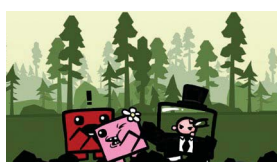
If you remember the Flatout series, it's for the comprehensive destruction and for the unwavering obsession with having its drivers hurled through car windscreens. New developer Kylotonn is involving the community with this latest crash-happy driving game, asking fans to vote on which tracks will return from previous games. In the absence of a new Burnout, there's room for a knockabout car game that doesn't take itself too seriously, although after the seriously guff Flatout 3 on PC, we're not entirely optimistic this'll be it. ■



KINGDOM COME: DELIVERANCE

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** SUMMER 2016
PUB WARHORSE / **DEV** WARHORSE

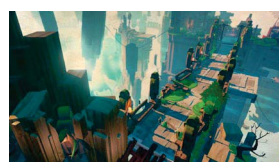
⦿ A medieval RPG, but without all the magic, elves, and magic elves that keep games like Dragon Age from feeling completely grounded. Developer Warhorse recently showed off the first-person swordfighting; it's just one part of the open-world adventure, but one that's looking surprisingly impressive. You'll be able to duck and weave and target specific body parts, with realistic physics governing your gory slices and chops.



SUPER MEAT BOY

FORMAT PS4/PS VITA
ETA 2015 / **PUB** TEAM MEAT
DEV TEAM MEAT

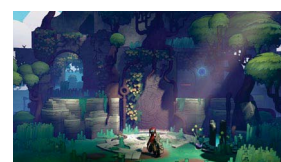
Five years after its release elsewhere, Super Meat Boy is finally squelching onto PlayStation. We say 'squelching' because, of course, the star of Team Meat's brutal platformer is a sentient slab of steak. He's trying to save his girlfriend Bandage Girl from the evil Dr Fetus, something that involves quite a lot of wall-jumping, circular saws and grisly deaths. Ouch. This is one of the indie scene's best and most difficult platformers, and as an act of conciliation for its belated release it's going to be launching for free on PlayStation Plus later this year. Bloody brilliant. ■



STORIES: THE HIDDEN PATH

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 2016
PUB SPEARHEAD GAMES
DEV SPEARHEAD GAMES

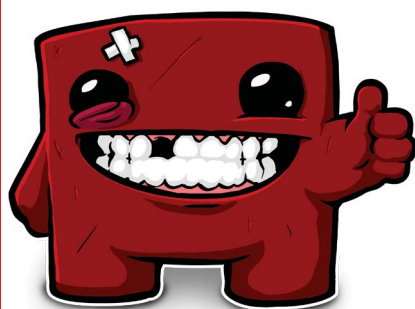
What is it about floating stuff that immediately attracts the attention of pirates, who flock to airborne islands and ships at the first sign of them rising from terra firma? They've done it again in Stories: The Hidden Path, an action RPG featuring "majestic airships" and "flamboyant magic." You'll play as Reynardo, an anthropomorphic "sky corsair" tasked with, naturally, saving the realm. It's being billed as an action RPG, but Stories is also a game about choices, with your decisions causing the narrator to dynamically alter his tale around you. ■

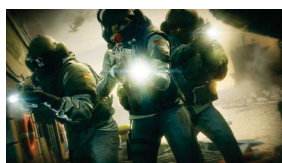


HOB

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 2016
PUB RUNIC GAMES
DEV RUNIC GAMES

Runic Games' latest has been simmering away for a while now, but the studio's finally brought Hob to the boil. Which is to say, the Torchlight dev has announced a new fantasy adventure starring a cute little hobgoblin thing. It's being described as a "vibrant, suspenseful adventure game" set in a strange world full of even stranger creatures, but with none of the text or dialogue that tends to be a big part of the genre. Puzzles are in, though, as is pushing stuff and climbing up things. We're looking forward to hearing about Runic's curio in much more detail very soon. ■





RAINBOW SIX: SIEGE

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 1 DEC
PUB UBISOFT
DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL

Siege's heavily destructible environments and asymmetrical teams are hugely exciting, but it was a bummer to learn that Ubisoft has delayed it until December. Given the publisher's track record, however, that's probably for the best. In our latest playtest, Terrohunt mode handles even better than its R6: Vegas equivalent, embellished here with new tools including a bloody great hammer (for when knocking through walls is the best option, natch). Ubi tells us that the delay will make co-op more fun, and weapons and gadgets will be better balanced. ■



KINGDOM HEARTS III

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 2016
PUB SQUARE ENIX / **DEV** SQUARE ENIX



Some of us may well be waiting for the inevitable Star Wars reveal (or what about hard-assed Muppets?), but when it comes to

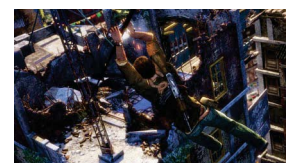
Disney acquisitions the announcement that Big Hero 6 is coming to Kingdom Hearts III should do a lot to bring in younger players (and, perhaps, parents). The long-awaited RPG is getting a Big Hero 6-themed world, with a story set after the events of the film. If the previous games are any indication, we'll spend most of the time fighting Kingdom Hearts baddies the Heartless, but lovable robot Baymax will be around to help Sora and his big key whack them to death. You'll even be able to ride Baymax around like an anthropomorphic blimp, it seems. ■



JUST CAUSE 3

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 1 DEC
PUB SQUARE ENIX
DEV AVALANCHE

While there will likely be enough radio towers to explode and buildings to leap from in the main game, Avalanche has revealed a new Challenge mode for its upcoming open-world destruct-'em-up. As the name suggests, you'll be completing various challenges against the clock, in exchange for juicy rewards. This is Just Cause we're talking about though, so tasks will range from gliding through hoops to blowing up multiple buildings with a rocket launcher, and they should act as a nice primer for the freeform craziness which you'll be able to execute in the open-world proper. ■



UNCHARTED: THE NATHAN DRAKE COLLECTION

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 7 OCT
PUB SONY / **DEV** NAUGHTY DOG

We're looking forward to playing the first Uncharted again, not least because we'll no longer have to clamber across logs using Sixaxis controls. Now Naughty Dog has revealed a few new features on top of the increased frame rate and resolution, including extra difficulty settings. Explorer neuters combat greatly, Speed Run adds a timer and leaderboards, while Brutal trumps Crushing difficulty (thanks for that). 65 character skins, a Photo mode, and Uncharted 4 Beta access sweeten the deal. ■

051



GRIP

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** DEC 2016 / **PUB** CAGED ELEMENT
DEV CAGED ELEMENT

Remember Rollcage? The unique racing game featured double-sided cars, which could be driven on walls or even on the ceiling? It also included a pumping dance soundtrack from the likes of Fatboy Slim? Yep, we did indeed put it on the cover in our OPSM1 days. Well, Rollcage's spirit lives on with the fast, furious Grip, a modern successor from some of the team behind the original games. You'll race across a host of planets, utilising destructive sci-fi weaponry while your car tumbles this way and that. Although its Kickstarter effort was cancelled, the team is still planning a PS4 version. ■



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 2

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 2016 / **PUB** SEGA / **DEV** SEGA



PSO2 has been around since 2012, and while it appears to be doing the business it hasn't had the same impact as the Dreamcast original – the lack of a Western release hasn't helped. Well, if you're reading this in Akihabara, we have some very good news: Sega's free-to-play, sci-fi MMO has just been announced for PS4. While there was a Vita version back in 2013, your options for playing it remain few. The PS4 release coincides with a new chapter, Reborn – now how about a Western release?

DIVINITY ORIGINAL SIN: ENHANCED EDITION

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** TBC 2015
PUB LARIAN / **DEV** LARIAN



This is a new golden age for top-down RPGs, and consoles are getting a

bunch of them this year.

Joining the brown, post-apocalyptic Wasteland 2 is the vibrant and colourful Divinity Original Sin, which wowed on PC last June. Developer Larian has revealed a little more about what our upgraded version entails, and it's shaping up to be more than a simple PC-to-console port. While the original had online co-op, the PS4 game features dynamic split-screen if the two heroes wander too far apart. You'll be able to explore the entire world apart, if you wish, though the turn-based tactical battles might be a little troublesome that way... ■



Honing their craft

We speak to Tearaway Unfolded creative lead Rex Crowle about how the gorgeous papercraft adventure came to be

Media Molecule's delightful Tearaway should have been a much bigger deal when it appeared on PS Vita a couple of years ago, but it's getting a second chance at stardom with the expanded PS4 version, which adds new content and makes full use of many of the DualShock 4's lesser-known features.

Unfolded is not quite the Tearaway you remember, then: it's more of a Director's Cut, the creative, paper-themed platforming of the original having been polished to a fine HD sheen. Canny integration with the PS4's Share button means that making and, well, sharing stuff is easier than ever too.

Ahead of launch we visited Media Molecule's offices recently for a lengthy chat with creative lead Rex Crowle, who got in the sharing spirit himself about the game's origins, the greatest ending in PlayStation history, and what this PS4 update brings to the table. Don't forget to flip over to p92's review, after.

OPM: You encourage creativity in players, whether it's level creation in LittleBigPlanet or printing off papercraft templates and making them in the real world for Tearaway. So what are some of the things the community has created that have resonated with you guys on the team?

Rex Crowle: One of the main examples I always come back to is with LBP1, when we saw someone who had made a fully working





Rex is giving his pet Wendigo figure away to one lucky OPM reader, and Sony's throwing in a copy of Tearaway Unfolded on PS4 too!

To enter our Tearaway Unfolded competition, head to www.futurecomps.co.uk/tearaway and answer the following by 30 Oct:

Tearaway Unfolded's concept is based on what crafty hobby?

- A) Knitting
- B) Sewing
- C) Papercraft

UK readers only. Full terms and conditions can be found at www.futuretcs.com

WE BROUGHT A POP-UP BOOK EXPERT INTO THE STUDIO. SHE SHOWED US THE 20 BASIC THINGS THAT ALL THE GOOD POP-UP BOOKS ARE MADE OUT OF.

» calculator, and it just blew our minds. We didn't know when we were developing the game whether it was just going to disappear as soon as we put it out, and having the Beta really helped to get a bit of insight as to how people would respond, and what players would do with these tools. And yeah, the calculator was just insane. The ingenuity they needed to wrestle with all of the deliberate limitations we'd put in — put in because we wanted the game to have its basis in physical, tangible reality...

So to take it to the level of a working calculator was a bit like seeing Charles Babbage's Difference Engine. It was just like: "Wow!" I don't really know how a computer works inside, and seeing something like that, I start to get more of an idea of what all of these 'memory arrays' and what-have-you mean.

OPM: The genesis of *Tearaway* is that it's all about paper, which is close to our hearts here on OPM! For you, what is the magic of paper?

RC: It was only when we started creating *Tearaway* and exploring different art styles, all of which didn't really go anywhere, that it became apparent that the actual material itself was more interesting than any of the artwork that was on it.

And I think it does come back to the limitations of the material that make it interesting. Just having those limitations to push against makes you come up with new ideas. When we brought a pop-up book expert into the studio, she showed us the 20 basic things that essentially all pop-up books are made out of. And suddenly, all of the designers on the project were like "Oohhhhh! We know what we can do with this now!" Until then it was more like an art style than the ethos of the game, and it made a huge difference to actually make something with the material.

I think it makes the world more interesting for a player when they can see how it's been put together. All of the TV I enjoyed as a kid



PlayStation is a core part of the craft movement. We want a game based on macaroni pictures, next.



Above You've seen this room in *Tearaway*'s marketing campaign, but it's actually Media Molecule's demo room. Behind the camera? The world's softest, most colourful sofa.

was wonky animation, puppet shows and things where you could see all the strings. It wasn't like a super-slick CG thing, because when you look at a super-slick CG thing you don't know how any of it was made; it's just very polished. It's not like you can sit there and go "Oh I wonder what shader they used on their knee?"

OPM: When you guys started on this you weren't all papercraft experts. How did you teach yourself? Was it just through brute force, or did you bring any other people besides the pop-up expert in to try and help?

RC: Even when we decided on papercraft, there's a lot of different styles

NEED TO KNOW



2008

LITTLEBIGPLANET

■ Miniscule development team Media Molecule creates a classic from nowhere. Nominally a cuddly platformer, in reality it's a totally comprehensive creation tool that inspires thousands to make and share things with the world.

2011

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

■ The sequel builds on that creation aspect, so much so that it's marketed as a 'platform for games' rather than a platform game. True to this, players can now easily make other types of games, and create their own cutscenes and music.

2012

LBP PS VITA

■ MM helps out on this handheld spinoff, which carries across most of the best bits while adding support for touch screen. You can now draw objects into the world directly.

closely tied to the PS Vita functionality. What were the main things you wanted to change when you made the leap to PS4, and what did the DualShock 4 allow you to do that you couldn't have done on PS Vita?

RC: I mean, yeah, there are sort of two elements. Obviously there's the simple one of the PS4 just being really powerful! So we knew we could make the world absolutely beautiful, and add a whole bunch of extra effects, and just really bring out more of the simulation of the paper and make it extra cool.

But like you say, that would be the safe route of "Let's make it look better." The core thing was, just how are you going to play with it?

I think if we were trying to do it on PS3 we would've really struggled, because I don't think there are enough extra things on the controller that hadn't been completely tapped out. And seeing what was on the DualShock 4, and having the touchpad on there, it felt like there was some really interesting stuff that could be done with it — more than just scrolling a map around.

We treat each new bit of hardware we get hold of like a bunch of kids would, all just sort of poking at it and trying to figure out what we can do with all its functions.

OPM: Are you sad that the DualShock 4 has brought quite a few new control elements that don't seem to have been adopted by the wider world? There are only one or two developers that have utilised certain

you can do with it, and initially we went down the route of having a low-poly style where everything's very faceted. That sort of style works okay for characters that are quite boxy, but it wasn't really bringing out the fragility and movement in the paper, so we started to go more freeform and moved away from some of the styles we'd been looking at.

Those [low-poly] things worked nicely as objects you can make yourself, and you can see several around the room like the army of squirrels behind you...

OPM: Argh! We're quite intimidated by them now that you've said that actually...

RC: There's a really early prototype Iota there as well. I don't know what happened to the legs... I accidentally made them look a bit like Orko from He-Man.

OPM: Ultimately, what put you on the track that led to the finished Iota and Atoi? Because they're so iconic and so different from Orko.

RC: We had quite a lot of different versions of a main character, and they went through a similar process. They were quite boxy and you couldn't really see the movement in them, and it felt like we were losing some of the flexibility we could get if we had a character with much longer legs and arms.

I was feeling that the problem at the core of it, really, was that there wasn't some element that just makes you go "Oh, that's made out of paper." And that's where the envelope came from. It makes you think "Well, what's inside the envelope?" And it starts to suggest that there's something in there. So yeah, it was just a case of anthropomorphising the envelope into a character you'd really care about, and want to find out more about.

OPM: When you made the decision to move onto PS4 for Tearaway, obviously there were a lot of conversations that must have happened because the original's mechanics were so

features, but for the most part these things are not really being embraced...

RC: Traditionally, with each round of hardware people are pushing the processing more and more, and what you get at the end of the era blows your mind compared to the early titles that came out. I think that will happen again on the technological side.

But I think there's also a lot of untapped potential on the actual controller. The fact that you can connect tablets and phones and what-have-you to the PS4 — there's probably more scope for innovation than there has been in the past, so I'm hoping that it won't just be that games look better. I'm hoping there'll be more interesting, experimental things. Whether that's coming from tiny indie teams, or innovative features that are slotted into triple-A open-world things, I think there's lots of potential for finding new uses for some of the hardware features that haven't really been talked about quite as much.

One of my favourite features of the PS4 is simply being able to plug my headphones into the pad. It just makes every game better because I play a fair bit at home and I like to be really immersed in the game. My girlfriend is a ridiculous Bloodborne player and I get a bit tired of hearing limbs flying off all the time! It's a great piece of user-centred design, being able to just plug it in.

OPM: Given that in Tearaway you claim a story is not a story until it's shared, how happy are you that you've now got a Share button on that controller, and what is your dream of how the sharing functionality can be a benefit to Tearaway on PS4?

RC: Yeah, it's great. It's really useful. It's funny in that we have a bunch of features that are obviously like the Share button, and we were like "Do we remove them?" Because obviously you could just walk around the world and instead of pulling out your little SLR camera and taking photos, you could just press the Share button. But at the same time, it felt like we'd lose a bit of the charm by doing that.

One of the things we've added is the ability to use a tripod on your camera. So now when you run around, you can put the camera down and then perform whatever moves you would normally perform but through a fixed camera. If you press the Share button at the same time you can actually make your own mini-movies, which is a nice thing for us to get out there.

Obviously, just being able to browse the Tearaway.me website through the PS4 is really useful, seeing what your friends have been creating and sharing as well.

OPM: It must be rather nice, just locally with a tablet, to be able to broaden the screen dimensions for creating and let a second person play at the same time?

RC: Yeah... we heard from a lot of people and we've had a lot of emails from players who played it with their very young children. ➤



If you have no child within when you arrive at Media Molecule, there may be one there by home time.



056

» They had a sort of tussle with them, because they'd either want to play or they would want to be creating papercraft, and it's like, the parent wants to be running off and having adventures and the kid wants to spend the whole time making a crown for the squirrel! Whereas now, because of us having this twin-screen thing, either party can be getting on with the element that most suits them.

So yeah, we're trying to be more inclusive. I don't think it's just 'family' because, well, trust me... Some of the things people get up to when playing the game on the tablet are definitely not family friendly!

OPM: Back on PS Vita the ending of *Tearaway* is so incredibly powerful – easily one of the best conclusions on any PlayStation platform. Talk us through the creation of that if you can – did you realise how well received that would eventually become?

RC: I definitely hoped it would. I think the thing that was hard to know was... well, you can never tell what emotional connection people are going to have with a thing until it's completely finished. And it wasn't until animators Lluís [Danti] and Mike [Pang] had done the cutscenes that lead up to the end, and then the music Kenny [Young] had done – that's when it all came together. And I think I've learned so much on this project with just the power of music, really. People talk about it being 50% of



Above While Media Molecule's studio comprises two floors, the top floor shuns work desks for an open-plan lounging area where people can get together and play games.

the experience, and obviously if you played the game without any visuals that wouldn't really bring out much emotion either, but the music really does make such a difference. All the weeks of us working on the ending without the animation leading up to it, and without the music, and it was like "I don't know if this is really gonna work." But luckily, when those extra elements came to they brought it all out.

And it's the fact that it's the player's journey. It's what *they've* done. So ultimately we've only made a percentage of what you see at the end of the game; it's down to the experiences and how much players have really engaged with it. It's kind of a riskier thing because people could have a worse experience if they haven't really worked with it.

We've done some extra things on PS4 that weren't there originally for the PS Vita version, which push some slightly different emotional

NEED TO KNOW

2012
LBP KARTING

■ MM also contributes to the inevitable LBP Karting, which chucks Sackboy and friends into handmade cars. It's essentially LBP meets Modnation Racers and, once again, user-generated content is the focus.

2013
TEARAWAY

■ Media Molecule returns to the spotlight with the beautiful Tearaway, which swaps sacks for paper and card. You play as sort of sentient envelope, on a mission to deliver a message to the player (i.e. you). While the critical reception is resoundingly positive, the sales are, unfortunately, less so.

2014
LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

■ The first main LBP not developed by Media Molecule, although the team did pitch in. Its big thing is new player characters, with three friends of various species and abilities added.

TBC
DREAMS

■ The company's next focus currently is its mysterious PlayStation Move title Dreams, which allows players to create scenes and animations and bring them to life. This could take user-generated content to another level.

a second time means we could bring more out of them. Some of the things we weren't able to fully explore before, the little backstories and visual things, we'd be able to really do them justice.

OPM: Could you identify one of those for example?

RC: Well, the Harbour area on the PS Vita. You could say it's a hub area, but it's a very small hub, and myself and Siobhan [Reddy, studio director] and Kenny, we'd always dreamt of this being a place of sea shanties and ghost stories, and tales of Sirens that drag people into the sea.

But due to timescales and also how much we could draw on the screen at one time, the Harbour was fairly small and you could kind of completely ignore it if you wanted to; you could walk through it and continue on. Whereas, this time around, it's actually a whole cove area, so you've got the sea to explore, you can jump on the paper airplane, fly around and find little islands. The harbour itself is probably three or four times bigger, with a lot more side content and quests to do.

It's kind of where the game becomes almost an RPG. You've got the classic scene with a whole bunch of things to do; it's just that, because it's our world, the quests are less "Go and find me five apples," and more



Top The studio or a BHS shop? Answers on a postcard...
Bottom MM won three BAFTAs for Tearaway on PS Vita.

buttons. Because we have more creative elements that we're doing in the game, it did become more of a sort of expanded conclusion.

OPM: When Unfolded was first announced there was an expectation that it was going to basically be the PS Vita game with different control functions, but it's only when you get your hands on it and begin immersing yourself that you realise how much new content there really is in there. So why is Unfolded still linked so closely to the original game rather than being pitched as a completely bespoke project?

RC: Some of it's down to... well, just really wanting to focus on the control differences and what-have-you, so that we knew we could make the most of what we have, rather than starting again from scratch on a different platform and then it all going completely wrong! And you know, we really love the locations that we've created and the journey that you go on through them. But having them

could bring more out of them. Some of the things we weren't able to fully explore before, the little backstories and visual things, we'd be able to really do them justice.

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“ MAKING A GAME IS A VERY COOL WAY TO EXPRESS YOURSELF – BUT THERE ARE LOADS OF OTHER WAYS. MAKE ART AND SHARE IT WITH THE WORLD! ”

"Someone's shooting amateur video footage of the harbour and they need you to fly around." Then they'll take animated GIFs of you and post them around town.

OPM: It's really making us crave a Tearaway spin on The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker.

RC: We did spend a long time trying to do our most open-world project ever – I don't know if you know about that version of Tearaway? It was originally a location-based RPG using PS Vita's GPS. So whenever you turned it on, you would be in that position – in a paper version of the real world. It turns out that making the entire real world in paper is quite ambitious for a team of about ten. In fact, it was a team of five back then!

So yeah, that slowly changed, particularly as we found that we were just trying to make a lot of procedurally generated stuff that was actually quite dull, and it was better to play to our strengths and make something that's really flavoured and interesting rather than spreading ourselves very thinly across an entire globe.

OPM: If you could scrawl a message to our readers, pop it in Atoi's envelope and send her off to everyone reading right now, what would you like it to say?

RC: Well, the terrible, cynical version of me would say "Please buy Tearaway!" But surely I must be able to do better than that..!

I think a lot of people want to get into the games industry and sometimes think that making a game is the way to express yourself. It is a very cool way to do it – but there are loads of other ways to express yourself. And whether that's making a piece of papercraft or doing some fan art, it's just cool to be able to express yourself and share it with the rest of the world. That's the meaning of fun! ■



The background of the entire page is a dramatic, low-angle shot from the game Uncharted 4: A Thief's End. It shows a massive, ancient stone structure, possibly a temple or a shipwreck, with intricate carvings. The scene is lit with a mix of cool blue and purple tones and warm orange and yellow light from a fire or explosion on the right side. The overall mood is adventurous and epic.

UNCHARTED 4

058

THIEF ENCOUN

On 18 March 2016, **Uncharted 4: A Thief's End** will finally hit PS4. Matthew Pellett tracks down creative director Neil Druckmann and writer Josh Scherr to find out why Nathan Drake's final outing will change the gaming landscape forever

UNCHARTED 4

TERS

059

Why is Uncharted 4 going to be the best Naughty Dog game ever made? That's what you came here to find out, which is why it's the first question we put to creative director Neil Druckmann when we discuss the concluding chapter of PlayStation posterboy Nathan Drake's adventures.

"I guess because it's the latest Naughty Dog game!" laughs Druckmann, clearly at ease with the levels of anticipation circling Naughty Dog's first original game to appear on PlayStation 4. "I don't know... Every game that we make, we have this big experienced team that we've been working with for years now, and we're evolving and constantly pushing ourselves; learning how to tell stories in this relatively new medium.

"We're getting more confident in telling more nuanced, more subtle types of stories. And then also what we're learning, specifically with Uncharted, is how we get more of that spectacle. That bombastic action. This was always the philosophy for Uncharted: how do we make you feel like you're inside a summer blockbuster?

"Now, with everything we've learned through the Uncharted games and everything we've learned with The Last Of Us, we feel like we can raise the spectacle and also tell a grounded, more personal, more intimate story to really dig deep into who Nathan Drake is as we close out his adventure."

Speak with most developers who work on action-adventure games such as Uncharted and they'll begin by spending minutes evangelising their game's combat or world or the game mechanics, but for Druckmann it all begins with the story.



Location-wise, Uncharted 4 will be looting and shooting its way to Madagascar.

"As a writer/director, I have to find what is the heart of this thing," he explains, "and since I've started work in this industry that's always been the case. Story's what I gravitate towards, and everything is built around that. And I want to make it clear there's a separation for me between story and writing. When I say 'story' I don't mean the script and the dialogue. It's about what is this thing that we're creating?

"So, for example, in The Last Of Us it was this relationship between two characters, and how do we,

"STORY'S WHAT I GRAVITATE TOWARDS AND EVERYTHING IS BUILT AROUND THAT."

through an adventure, get you to feel the love of a parent and a child? That's through cinematics, through gameplay, through music, through performances, through our graphics... everything is revolving around that concept.

"With Uncharted 4, as we were building it we were realising more and more what the theme is: it's that balance between pursuing your passions and being with the ones you love, and what happens when you have to choose between those two things. Is there a way to

reconcile that? That's the message of this game, and everything is constructed around that very simple concept."

BURIED TREASURE

"The whole process starts with developing the story outline," says Josh Scherr, former lead cinematics animator for the trilogy and now writer of Uncharted 4. "We usually refer to it as the Macro. With the Macro you come up with the broad strokes of the story: who the characters are, what their particular arcs are going to be, what their relationships are to each other.

"And then — because it's an Uncharted game — you're also figuring out who's the historical figure or what's the historical artefact they're going to be going after, and what locations are they going to be going to in the search for this. So the early days are kinda fun because not only are you trying to figure out a cool new story

for your characters to live through, but you're also doing some historical research and trying to dig up some cool artefacts for everybody to be chasing after."

So far in the Naughty Dog games we've searched for the fabled El Dorado (not, in fact, a city of gold but a golden

sarcophagus) in Uncharted: Drake's Fortune; sought out the magical kingdom of Shambhala and the treasured Cintamani Stone in Uncharted 2: Among Thieves; and hunted the Iram Of The Pillars in Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception. In Uncharted 4: A Thief's End, Drake's seeking none other than pirate haven Libertalia, and for Scherr it was, out of all the historical mythologies the team could have picked from, the most obvious legend to focus on when wrapping up Uncharted's tale.

"Libertalia was this legendary pirate colony and, in all likelihood, it didn't actually exist. One of the only places that it's mentioned is in this old book called A General History Of The Pyrates, which was written by one Captain Charles Johnson who some people believe was a pseudonym for the author Daniel Defoe, writer of Robinson Crusoe. A lot of what we know about pirates comes from this book, but a lot of the information from this book is, in all likelihood, completely apocryphal or just outright bullsh*t!

"But taking a step back for a second, one of the things that drew

LIFE AFTER DRAKE

Does Drake's end mean Uncharted's end?

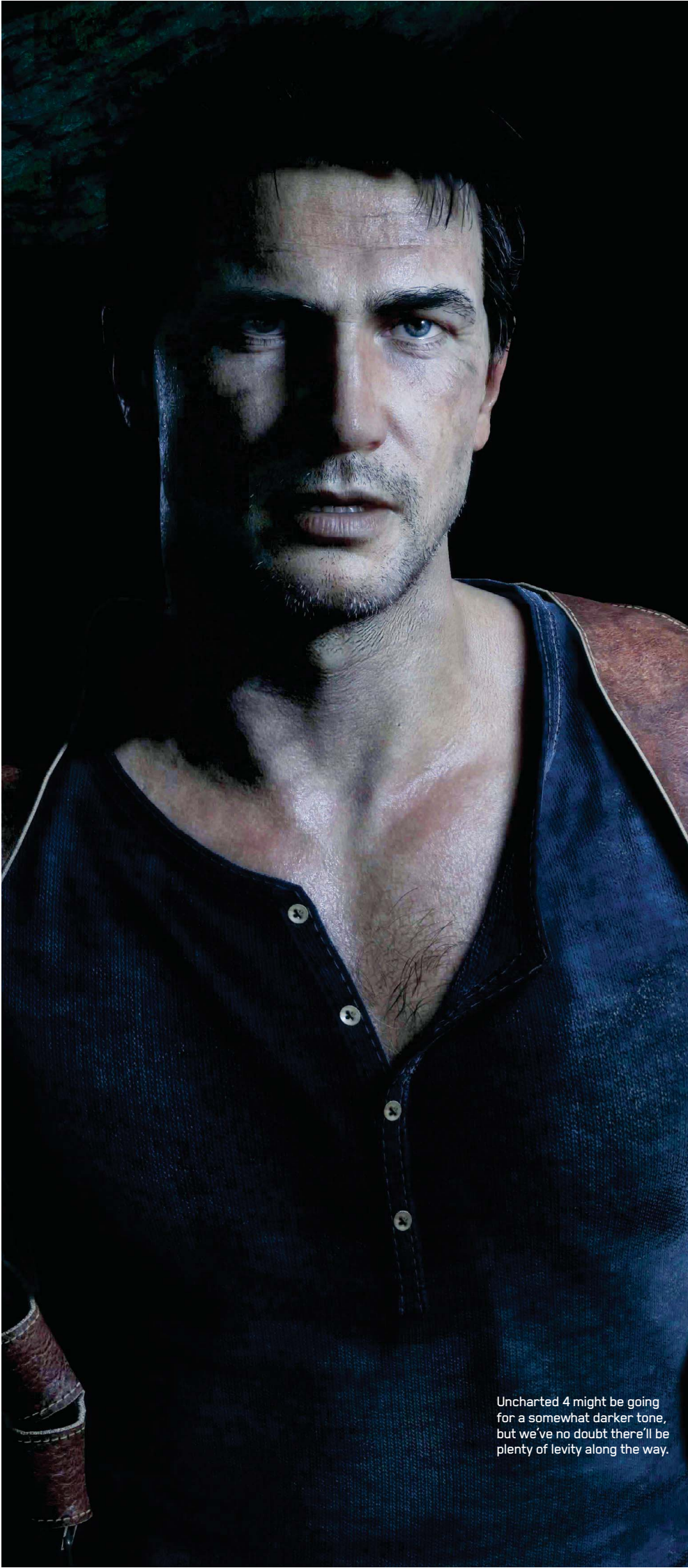
Saying goodbye is tough to do, and for all the talk of Uncharted 4 being the closing chapter of Nathan Drake's story there's one question that must still be answered: can Uncharted exist without Nathan Drake?

"I don't know. That's a good question," mulls Josh Scherr. "I think one thing that's been great about this series is that we have created this... I hate to use the

word universe because Marvel's been overusing it, but we've created this world where ancient civilisations remain undiscovered and lots of charismatic and unscrupulous treasure hunters exist to go and pursue these.

"I suppose you could tell a story in that world without Nathan Drake, but it's... in some ways it's a little bit hard to imagine."





Uncharted 4 might be going for a somewhat darker tone, but we've no doubt there'll be plenty of levity along the way.

us to doing pirates in general is also what it represents. Pirates have had this universal appeal to people — it's this idea of this romantic adventure. A life at sea, raiding ships, taking gold and living large. For most people in the 16th and 17th [and 18th] centuries, reading about pirates was their form of escapist entertainment, like a fantasy that they could indulge themselves in. Libertalia was the ultimate representation of that fantasy.

"The idea with Libertalia was that it was a place where 'Every man is born free and is free to breathe whatever air he desires regardless of his status, his social class, his rank or anything else like that'. They all shared their property and their goods; their treasure and money was all collected into a common treasury... It was this paradise where every man was equal and formerly wealthy aristocrats lived among freed slaves. It was this idea of a perfect society."

LIBERTALIA CITY

The links to Uncharted, says Scherr, are obvious. "Most people in this world are condemned to living these fairly ordinary lives, eking out their success where they can. They have to live within the laws of the land, but pirates escape the laws which govern us. They're free spirits who live by their own rules; 'Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!' and all that sort of thing.

"That's also a lot of what Uncharted is about. It's this escapist fantasy and it's going to these fantastical places. A lot of it dovetails back in with our story. Nathan Drake, after Uncharted 3, has stepped away from his life and he and Elena have both agreed that they are going to attempt to live normal lives. But at a certain point when his brother Sam comes back into his life, Drake's sort of drawn back into things.

"So the thing that we keep coming back to is the idea that every treasure has its cost. You can pursue this life, but there's going to be a cost to it, and you have to live with the consequences of the choices that you make. And the fact of that matter is, whatever the fantasy is, the real life of pirates was very tough and often cruel. They spent a lot of their lives at sea, a lot of them got scurvy, they'd be constantly pursued by the authorities; if they set foot on land it's very likely they'd be caught and hanged for their crimes... So there's the



UNCHARTED 4

» romantic ideal and then there's the reality, and that was kind of the draw of *Libertalia* because it was sort of the *ultimate* deal."

FAMILY MATTERS

That concept of balancing passion and ties, of treasure and cost, is a deeply personal one for Druckmann. Having grown up in Israel, *Uncharted*'s director taught himself English by reading and playing videogames such as Sierra's classic *King's Quest* adventures, and those latter experiences directly contributed to him pursuing a dream to work in the gaming industry. This dream took him across the world, away from his homeland, and to Naughty Dog's Californian HQ.

"You kind of hit the nail on the head there, which is, I think, why I've personally gravitated so much towards this concept," says Druckmann when we highlight the similarities between *Uncharted 4*'s theme and the decisions he's had to make during his own life. "It is a struggle. I grew up with games, and since as far back as I can remember just being able to tell great stories in games is something that means a lot to me. But it has come with great sacrifices along the way.


"Luckily I have a support system of family, but it has definitely tested us and sometimes relationships are strained because of it. At times you do have to make some pretty hard choices, and there are sometimes things at work that I have to miss for the family, and sometimes the job requires me to miss certain family things."

And Druckmann isn't alone. "I think most people who do pursue a job that they love, whether it's something in a creative field or a technical field, make certain sacrifices," echoes Scherr. "This is not a nine-to-five kind of workplace, you know? People here are very dedicated and very passionate about what they do, and sometimes — particularly as a project nears its end — that means that they're putting in some long hours, and it's hard!

"A lot of my work here and at home is about trying to strike a balance in my life between pursuing something I love and then being with the people I love. There's definitely some resonance of that in the story of *Uncharted 4*."

Originally, of course, that story was supposed to conclude imminently, but back in March Druckmann took to the Official PlayStation Blog to announce that A

While originally interested in animation, Druckmann eventually pursued a love of videogame programming.



"THIS FEELS LIKE
THE END OF AN ERA
FOR THE STUDIO."

NEIL DRUCKMANN
CREATIVE DIRECTOR



Expect more downtime between set-pieces. "One of my favourite parts of Uncharted 2 is that [quiet] village sequence," admits Druckmann.

Thief's End would be pushed back to 2016 – 18 March 2016, to be exact, though that release date is a much newer revelation.

"It was a very hard decision," reflects Druckmann. "We pride ourselves on shipping on time. You see so many game projects that get delayed endlessly over and over – one year it's announced then it'll come out several years later. The Last Of Us was the first game we ever delayed – by a month – and we felt so guilty and so horrible having to do that.

"And yet we knew that despite how bad we felt with that decision, shipping a game that wasn't up to our vision would have felt worse. And that's kind of the decision we came to with Uncharted; so much of the development and figuring things out happens as we go, and there were certain sequences where we were like 'Okay, this is a pretty ambitious sequence, we will probably have to cut this...'

"Even when I'm describing the ending, it's a pretty... Well, I guess this is a little bit of a spoil... Nah, I'm not going to say it! But there is something that happens that requires quite a bit of work for what we want it to do, and again we would have had to reduce that scope and reduce that ambition to meet that [original] deadline.

"So we were weighing those choices between fans and their expectations. It was going to disappoint them to push this thing back, but this is the last chapter for Nathan Drake, so let's give ourselves as much time as possible and go all-out for this series."

END OF AN ERA

The fact that Uncharted 4 is the end of Drake's story is inescapable. Naughty Dog has never shied away from that truth, going as far as to write it in the game's title. "What makes a good ending?" repeats Druckmann when we ask him that very question. "Hmm. I'm just going

to steal from Robert McKee – his book is like my bible for what makes a good classical story – [and say] a good ending is a payoff. The entire story is setting up this final message, and it ties it all together and it gives you a sense of closure.

"And if things are left dangling, they're left dangling for a reason. Not to set up a sequel, but they're left dangling to raise interesting questions about the theme of what it is you've just experienced.

"The other thing is that an ending

"It's very important," continues Druckmann. "That's one of our goals for this game; to wrap up Nathan Drake's story. If you look back on the series you've seen this guy mature. With Uncharted 4, we're really trying to answer questions like 'What is it that made this guy become who he is?' and 'Can that person ever change?' and 'Is it possible to get out of that cycle or not?' We have to definitively answer those questions if we're approaching the end [of Drake's journey]."

Even though creative director Neil Druckmann and game director Bruce Straley temporarily parted ways with Nathan Drake after Uncharted 2: Among Thieves (rather than working on Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception they instead headed up development on The Last Of

Us), the gravity of A Thief's End's, well, *end* isn't lost on the duo.

"We get more and more that feeling of this definitely [being] the end of an era for us as a studio," says Druckmann. "We've been with this franchise for almost ten years now from inception all the way to this point. Luckily, we don't get too much time to dwell on that feeling because we're so busy, but every once in a while... *you know?*

"I remember when Bruce and I came onto the project. A few

"SHIPPING A GAME THAT DIDN'T LIVE UP TO OUR VISION WOULD HAVE FELT WORSE."

needs to be, on one hand, surprising, and yet, in hindsight, inevitable. When you look back at it, it should seem really obvious that everything led to that point, and yet when it happens you should not be able to guess exactly how things are going to play out."

Drawing a line under Naughty Dog's most successful series to date is a bold move for the studio, but there's no doubt in the team's minds that A Thief's End has a duty to be the true finale for the series.

CRASH BASH

What happens when lightning strikes twice?

So far Uncharted 4 has had two major live gameplay demos, one at the PlayStation Experience last December, and one at E3 this June. In both cases Bruce Straley has been playing, and in both demos things have gone wrong: first Drake died and fell through the world in the PSX combat sequence, and then Drake chose not to move at all at E3 until a demo reset fixed things.

"Luckily I'm not on stage like Bruce is," confides Druckmann. "I'm in the audience. But yeah, your stomach drops and you're freaking out, because you know you work so hard on this thing but the game is not done, so you know that there are still these bugs in there. You're always so nervous because something can go wrong, and then when it does, first of all you think 'Can we even

recover from this? Can we play the rest of this? You don't know what's going to happen.

"But what was awesome about both of those instances is that everybody came up to us and was like 'Dude, that was awesome – it just showed that it was a real thing. I always think that those demos are a video playing in the back and you guys are just pretending to play'."

» weeks later we pitched a pretty new story to the team, kind of like a new direction for the project. A lot of things were pretty rough and just slotted in, so there was an ending but it wasn't as well defined, and at some point we defined more of the [plot] thread and a more definitive ending, and we did a second pitch for the team.

"You could tell people in the room were just getting emotional as we were discussing the specifics of how this series is going to end. That was one of those moments where you felt the excitement and anticipation for our fans to experience this, but a little bit of sadness because it's ending. The other day we finished motion capture with Emily Rose (Elena) and Richard McGonagle (Sully), and some people got teary-eyed in the room because they've been part of this project for many, many years now and it's wrapping up."

NORTH REMEMBERS

Back in June at the Metrocon convention, Nathan Drake voice actor Nolan North also talked about this shift in plot, suggesting a hefty slab of work (as much as eight months' worth) was lost with this change in direction that came as part of Druckmann's and Straley's new pitch. So was Uncharted 4 always intended to be the end point before this reset?

"Until things are pinned down then it's never definite. I guess when we work on a project we're constantly having concepts and ideas, and we might say whether a certain character is going to live or die. We play with all those ideas, and I think at some point even on Uncharted 3 we were saying it was going to be the last one, but then it shifted and it didn't become that."

"But once we put the pins in those things, it became very real. We'd been discussing it throughout production [about how] it's going to be the last one, but when we said 'Well, here's exactly how it's going to happen and we're committing to this and here are the scripts for it'



A GAME-exclusive Collector's Edition includes a statue, art book and MP skins.

then all of a sudden it's like 'Oh, this IS the end for Nathan Drake.'"

For Josh Scherr, who remained on the Uncharted series when others moved across to develop The Last Of Us, saying goodbye is even harder. "By the time we ship I'll have been working on this series for a decade, which is a little bit more than one fifth of my life at this point. I'll let you do the math," he chuckles.

"Anyhow, there's a lot of poignancy there as we're tying up some loose ends and answering

"AT SOME POINT ON UNCHARTED 3 WE WERE SAYING IT WAS GOING TO BE THE END."

some unanswered questions about [Drake's] past and about his possible future. We're definitively ending Nathan Drake's tale, and just that alone makes me a little bit sad. But I think the fans who have been with us particularly from the beginning are going to be satisfied with the way we wrap things up."

PIECE BY PIECE

"I guess our approach in the past has been to go bigger," mulls Druckmann as conversation shifts towards Uncharted's classic set-pieces. "You saw that evolution from Uncharted 2 to Uncharted 3, but with this one we felt

like if we went any bigger, it would become comical; we would become a parody of ourselves. So it became really about how do we make them unique? How do we make them more playable?"

At E3, Naughty Dog showcased some of Nate's new driving skills in demo that escalated and escalated until Drake was sucked into an epic, load-free car-chase/vehicle-top-shootout/post-crash-QTE/into-the-screen-escape combination that left us all breathless. Just don't expect every set-piece in Uncharted 4 to be quite so frenetic.

"What we did with The Last Of Us was we constantly went small, quote-unquote, with the set-pieces. They became these very intimate sections. So you had Joel when he's injured and he's stumbling; that's still a set-piece."

"I keep telling this story and people don't believe me, but the photobooth in Left Behind, and the pictures that Ellie and Riley take — that took as much work as the collapsing building in Uncharted 2 as far as man-hours and resources. It's this really small moment, if you were to look at it and compare it to a film, but for us it's like: we have so many resources, so how do we best allocate them? Yes, we're

going to have big spectacle set-pieces, but the thing that The Last Of Us and Left Behind gave us is the confidence to create these small, intimate moments where there isn't a threat of death, but it's another way to get to know the characters through interactivity."

"Those are really, for us, just as exciting as what you saw at E3; the big spectacles. I'm excited to see how fans react to that new balance of spectacle versus intimate [moments]."

Mention of Left Behind is especially apt for Uncharted 4, because while The Last Of Us' celebrated DLC chapter was the first ever slice of single-player expansion content Naughty Dog had ever created, it's now no longer the *only* chapter. That's because Uncharted 4: A Thief's End will also support story DLC post-release.

"Left Behind was the very first story DLC we ever embarked upon," says Scherr, referencing the lessons learned by those members of the TLOU team who designed Left Behind and are now back on Uncharted.



ND's open working practices have helped build a legacy of groundbreaking titles.



"Some of the things that we weren't sure about were length and value for money: how much we were going to charge for it, what kind of budget could we do and what did the budget provide us in the way of opportunities and limitations? Really, though, what it boiled down to was we do what we always do: we make the game that we want to make, and then we hopefully try and do a better job of doing that again the next time."

BEYOND BEHIND

"One thing that was nice about Left Behind was that there was a little bit less pressure on the team than there [would have been] with developing a new IP. The Last Of Us was very, very stressful and very difficult to create, but it got such a fantastic response that the team felt more comfortable in taking a couple of risks [with the DLC]."

"So in addition to the story content you had all these little experimental moments: moments of branching dialogue, and long stretches where there was no combat. Just Ellie and Riley slowly making their way through the mall, trying on masks."

"All of these moments of interactivity that ordinarily we might have done in a cutscene, we tried to make interactive. And the fact that a lot of it worked and really resonated with people is really encouraging us to continue to try doing a lot of those things. It was really just like making a big game on a small scale, and now that we know what's involved in making something that size, hopefully whatever mistakes and mishaps we may have made making Left Behind... we'll be able to avoid those and make some brand new ones!"

Mistakes? Mishaps? Scherr says those words with tongue firmly in cheek, and rightly so. Such was the peerless quality of The Last Of Us (last year tens of thousands of you voted in our 100th issue poll to crown it the greatest PlayStation game of all time), expectation for Uncharted 4 is sky-high. So how does Druckmann, whose last two projects were Game Of The Generation duellists Uncharted 2 and The Last Of Us, cope with that overwhelming expectation?

"That pressure is always there, I think. There was something nice with Uncharted 2: we were kind of under-the-radar. I don't think anyone expected Uncharted 2 to be what it was. After that there »

**"THE FANS WHO
HAVE BEEN WITH US
FROM THE START
WILL BE SATISFIED."**

JOSH SCHERR
WRITER

UNCHARTED 4

» was this mounting pressure, and I remember during the development of *The Last Of Us* it could be crushing at times, because you'd want it to be so good.

"Now? You feel it for so long you start becoming numb to it. And then you realise there's nothing you can do. Awards are outside of your hands. Reviews are outside of your hands. It's a subjective thing — people are going to think whatever they want to think, so all we can do on our end is make the game that we want to play.

"And for us, we evolve as developers. We evolve as gamers, so our tastes are different now than they were when we made *Uncharted 2*, or even when we made *The Last Of Us*. It's [about] knowing that we're gamers and trusting our gut, and letting that drive us and not worrying about anything else. Hopefully the other people who play it have similar tastes."

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

As for seeing how people react to *Uncharted 4*, that process has already begun. As far as Druckmann is concerned, the game doesn't begin on 18 March 2016 — it began way back at E3 2014 when we first saw Nathan Drake washed up on that gloomy beach.

"I believe that what the player sees before they play sets up a certain expectation, and that's going to affect how they approach the game and the kind of enjoyment they're going to get. From the moment you see the first trailer and the first demo, that's already part of the experience. And so I try and have as much say in that as I can and push for certain things."

This philosophy isn't a new one for Druckmann, who has experience in mapping out what players are exposed to even years before a game is released with *The Last Of Us*.

"With *The Last Of Us* I was really vigilant about certain things like 'We'll never reveal that you'll play as Ellie' and that 'Past this certain chapter, no one's allowed to show anything in a trailer.'"

But those plans aren't limited to what is and isn't shown — for Naughty Dog, these trailers are little games in themselves that can deliberately subvert the pre-release player dialogue.

"We purposely deceived [players] with certain trailers. There was even, in one of *The Last Of Us*' story trailers, a shot where Joel's on the floor and he looks kind of sick and



THE LAST OF US 2

Is there truth behind talk of a sequel?

How to melt the internet in nine words: "I know they're doing *The Last Of Us 2*." Back in June, the voice of Nathan Drake, Nolan North himself, became the hottest topic on gaming sites the world over when he said that very thing at a Metrocon panel. And of course we weren't going to pass up the opportunity to ask TLOU's creative director Neil Druckmann about the explosive statement...

"I can say that was kind of a surprise for us for him to say that," laughs Druckmann in response. "I was like 'Oh, he knows more than we know

[about] what we're doing next!' We joked about it afterwards during shoots and stuff."

"The answer is — and this is totally honest, and I've said this in the past — that when Bruce [Straley] and I moved over to *Uncharted 4*, we were brainstorming ideas for *The Last Of Us 2* with new characters; ideas for TLOU 2 with Joel and Ellie; ideas for a sci-fi game; ideas for a fantasy game; and building prototypes for each one of those ideas. And just as we were getting close to settling or narrowing that list down, we were asked to work on *Uncharted 4*.

"We had a small team still working on those prototypes, kinda wrapping them up, and then everybody moved onto *Uncharted 4*. So right now it's like *Uncharted 4* all the time."

"You know, there's a part of me that's really looking forward to going back to those things, but I have no cycles left in my mind even to be thinking about that right now!"

"So, I guess he was kind of right in that we were working on stuff, but we don't know what we're doing next and we won't know until probably a few months after we finish *Uncharted 4*."



When planning the E3 Jeep chase sequence, Druckmann and the team "looked at Ronin and every kind of car chase we could get our hands on."

he turns up. That shot was made *just* for the trailer. *Just* to make it look like he's infected or there's something wrong with him, and then it's juxtaposed with a shot of Ellie holding a gun, so everyone's like 'Oh my God, Joel's going to turn and Ellie's going to have to shoot him at the end!' That was constructed in such a way so that people would guess that and think that that's the obvious ending, and then we could turn it on them."

Does that mean you shouldn't believe what you see in Uncharted 4's demos? "Now maybe I'll show you the real thing so you think it's *not* the real thing and it *will* be the real thing!" Druckmann laughs when we begin spiralling down the conspiracy rabbit hole. "But we're very conscious about what we want to show in gameplay, what we want to show as far as story goes, and then we have like a spoiler list of 'Here are the things we're never going to talk about and we're never going to show' because we want them to be completely fresh when you play the game."

One thing that's not on the list? "I pretty much convinced him at one point that somebody in the game should be stabbed instead of shot," quips Scherr about the scripting process. So heed that warning, readers: watch out for pointy objects while on your adventures...

THE END IS NIGH

Of course, 18 March won't be the end of the story. Literally. That aforementioned DLC episode means work on Uncharted 4 is going to stretch a little further into 2016, although Scherr already has his release day mapped out. "With the story DLC coming up we're [eventually] going to be jumping into that to try and make that

something cool, but on 18 March I think I'm probably going to be playing our game on my own TV at home, letting my wife see why I disappeared for a couple of months!"

And when it's all over, DLC and all? What does Druckmann hope people will take away from the Uncharted saga, and Uncharted 4: A Thief's End in particular?

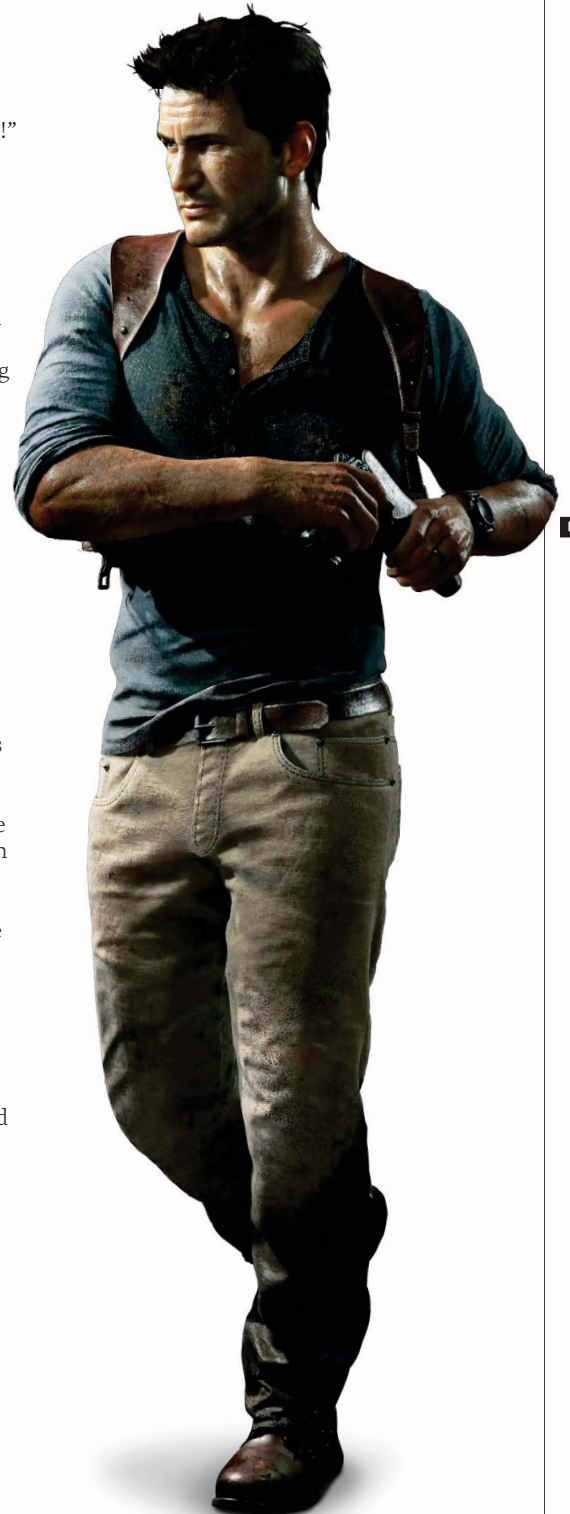
"First and foremost I hope people are entertained. If we fail on that level then nothing else kinda matters. Have we created something which is engaging? That's the most important thing for when we make one of these games.

"Beyond that, hopefully they are moved emotionally in some way. In *The Last Of Us* I was thrilled to read about people's experiences with the ending and how they wrestled with certain philosophical ideas. Even people talking about their relationship with their kids or their loved ones, and how the game made them reflect on their real life.

"As an artist, I think that's the greatest compliment, even if people disagree with maybe what the message is. The fact that they got the message, and that it inspired them to get angry on a forum about how they feel about Joel or something else.

"I'm hopeful that with Uncharted 4: A Thief's End, similarly people will look back at their lives. Whether it's music that drives you or wanting to make videogames or wanting to make films, everybody has a certain passion that they feel they will shrivel up and die if they don't pursue this thing. And at the same time, you're trying to find partnership or a soulmate or whatever it is, and you can't always have them both.

"I hope people leave the game talking about that." ■



067

THE A-Z OF FALLOUT 4

THE COUNTDOWN TO THE APOCALYPSE
CONTINUES. ON 10 NOVEMBER, THE MOST
EAGERLY ANTICIPATED RPG ON PS4 WILL FINALLY
BE UNLEASHED. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

A

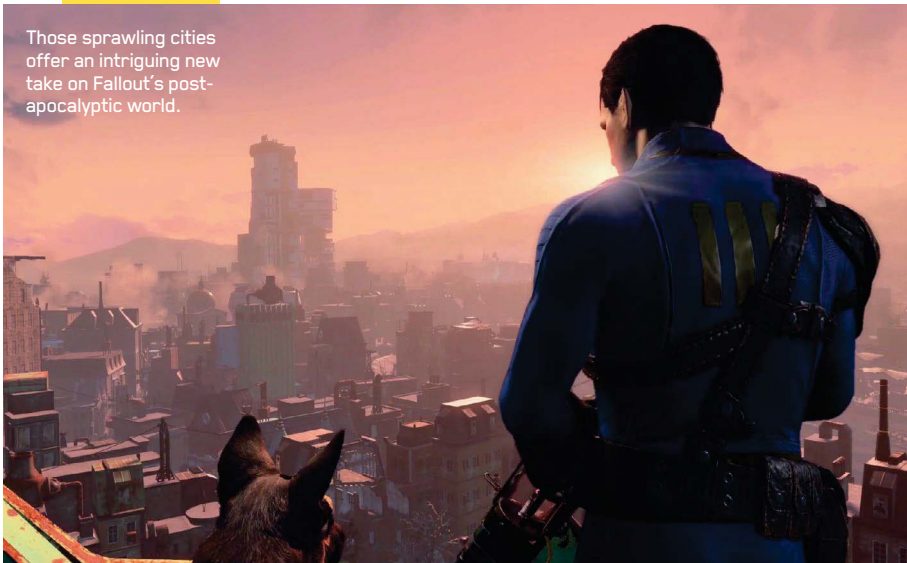
ARROW TO THE KNEE



The game's lead writer, Emil Pagliarulo, is responsible for 2011's most pervasive Skyrim meme. Todd Howard's described him as the "king of one-liners," so we can expect Fallout 4 to follow comedic suit. "I used to be a ghoul, until... well, I still am. For eternity. Please kill me." You can have that one for free, Emil.



Those sprawling cities offer an intriguing new take on Fallout's post-apocalyptic world.



B

BOSTON



More or less the only rumour about Fallout 4 that ended up being wholly true was about its setting. Boston was chosen for being a rich source of American history (remember nabbing Abe Lincoln's hunting rifle from the Washington Museum? More of that, please) and a huge centre for technological innovation.

Boston-born developers have said the game makes them feel homesick, taking in sites real (Red Sox stadium Fenway Park), recreated (ex-city centre Scollay Square, which was demolished in our world decades ago) and augmented (the historic warship USS Constitution now has some whacking big afterburners attached).

It allows for some proper urban sprawl, something the last two games never quite nailed, but also encompasses the Massachusetts countryside, which has been transformed into suburban wastes, rad-rich swamps and worse. Boston offers more to see than ever – it just might not be the kind of depiction its real-life tourist board would want.



THE A-Z OF FALLOUT 4

C

CONSTRUCTION



The game's biggest addition appears to be its new settlement-building element. Certain areas will be made available for construction, leading to a not-so-mini-game that crosses Minecraft with The Sims. You can build and decorate towns from scratch, designing houses, decorations, even stringing up power lines to give the place a modern buzz.

Create an attractive enough proposition and settlers will move in, occupying homes, even setting up shops that sell rare gear – which then makes you a target for raiders, meaning you'll need to prepare defences and become the warrior-mayor you've always dreamed of being.

D

DOGMEAT



In Fallout 3, Dogmeat was as likely to help you as glitch out and disappear forever, like some heartbreaking metaphor for parenthood. In his return (we think of him as a sort of canine Doctor Who figure, regenerating for each new instalment), the orphaned German Shepherd should prove far more useful, and far less likely to make us weep uncontrollably.

Dogmeat is an invulnerable companion who'll growl when he senses danger, woof when a new threat approaches, fetch items on command and, in a pinch, tear the throats out of enemies who threaten you. That he's a motion-captured, real-life dog should make all of that twice as adorable.



E

ENGINE



Fallout 4 is running on the same Gamebryo engine as Fallout 3, but it has been adapted and updated so many times as to make it unrecognisable. It makes Fallout 4 a much prettier game than its predecessors – a vibrant, colourful apocalypse, coupled with cinematic convo sections that don't look like a bunch of puppets on strings.



F

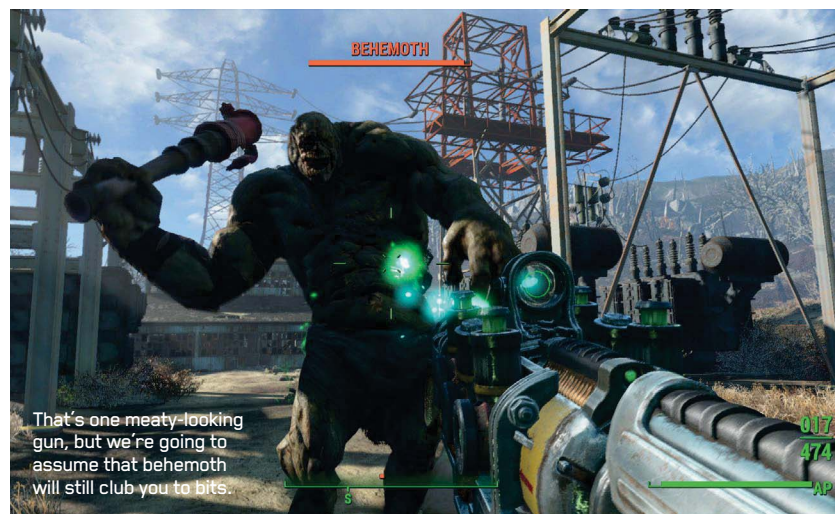
FPS



The clearest shift in focus for the series is in its shooting. Where old games felt like RPGs in shooter clothing, there's a real sense of speed and reaction to Fallout 4's gunplay. Enemies stagger under fire, the world has a semblance of destructibility and the weapons themselves have a grunting weight we're not quite used to from Bethesda.

Take the new laser musket, a brilliant bit of retrofitted sci-fi – every shot of burning light is preceded by your character straining to crank the firing chamber, like he's grinding deadly coffee. The chamber lights up, and the gun kicks like a steampunk mule when it goes off, scattering beams across red-lit rooms.

Enemies will still survive nukes to the face if your stats aren't high enough, sure, but there's now a sense of satisfying, immediate feedback to combat that might just help you ignore the odd little mathematical details in the background.



That's one meaty-looking gun, but we're going to assume that behemoth will still club you to bits.

F**KFACE

The voice actor for Mr Handy recorded about 1,000 names for your character, including 'Mr McFly' and 'Mr F**kface'.

G

GENETICS



Unlike with cruel Mother Nature, we get to modify every inch of our digital avatar's facial features, and in a more hands-on fashion than ever. Gone are the 'cheek radius' sliders of old – now you just grab onto bits of your character's face and yank them into the required size and shape. Do the same for their spouse and the game even generates a baby based on the two.



H

HUMANITY



There's a reason this is *post-apocalyptic fiction* – good ol' humanity doesn't just stop after the bomb's dropped. Fallout 4 includes real little bits of civilisation; full, working cities built on the rubble of the Old World. It lends the game a feeling of relatable reality, where people are attempting to rebuild for a new future amid the irradiated destruction they now call a home.



Because nothing says 1950s sensibilities quite like a robot named after a Disney talking clock.

INTRODUCTION



We might be playing further in the future than ever, but we'll also see further into the past. The game begins before the bomb drops, as we create our characters in front of their bathroom mirror and choose SPECIAL stats when a Vault-Tec salesman comes to the door.

We get to see a slice of futurist Americana that we'd previously been forced to imagine, with your Mr Handy, Cogsworth, buzzing about the faux-'50s home. Then it all goes wrong, 200 years pass, and the game begins proper...

JETPACKS!

Power armour can now be outfitted with rocket boosters to allow for aerial assaults. Reduced mobility? Shmeduced shmobility!

Want to get your hands on the Hulkbuster-esque T-60 power armour below? Best get crafting.

J

JUNK



Bethesda is renowned for its commitment to clutter; worlds as full of useless ornaments as they are mission-critical, death-dealing machinery. Previous games in the series would solve this junk problem by eventually offerering you the Rock-It Launcher, which fired obsolete artefacts into the pulpy faces of your enemies. Fallout 4 is more holistic.

Every piece of junk you find fits somewhere into the game's new crafting system, which enables you to upgrade and crossbreed all weaponry in the game. Need glass for a sniper scope? Scavenge some microscopes. It should make the world feel that much more integral to how you play.

Director Todd Howard's taken pains to say that you don't *have* to do any of this – but the ability to build your own power armour, or turn a plasma pistol into a rapid-fire sniper rifle, will most likely prove too tempting for us all.



K

KARMA?



We haven't seen any real hints as to whether Fallout's morality system will be back in the new game. Many complaints lay around how easy it was to manipulate previously – but the site of an orbital blast hitting what looks like central Boston brings back memories of Megaton. Even if we aren't being rated for them, expect there to be some big choices ahead.



L

LARYNX



Your character now has one. And it actually works. Both the male and female player-characters are fully voiced this time, with 13,000 lines of dialogue recorded for each one. It should mean that old feeling of guiding around a pair of floating ghost-eyes is mitigated a tad.

M

MELEE



Close combat always felt like a last resort in the older games. Even with a great weapon, the way combat worked meant that shooting from afar was almost always a better option. But our latest gameplay demos have us thinking that might be about to change.

We've gleefully watched a player laying into strong enemies with a reinforced bat (made using that crafting system, no doubt), targeting their limbs with VATS and, when they were crippled, performing a no-fussing bespoke melee execution.



N

NEVERENDING



Unlike previous games, Fallout 4 takes a leaf out of The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's book when it comes to its endgame. Once the main storyline is over, you can continue your wanderings – and you can continue them forever, because there's no level cap. Goodbye life.

O

OPEN WORLD



Todd Howard recently said he'd been playing for 400 hours, and was still stumbling across parts of the world he'd never seen before – and he's *making* the thing. In a world the size of Skyrim, but with far more packed in, you can expect to stay for a while. Luckily, you can now call in Brotherhood Of Steel Vertibirds to fly you around, quick-smart.

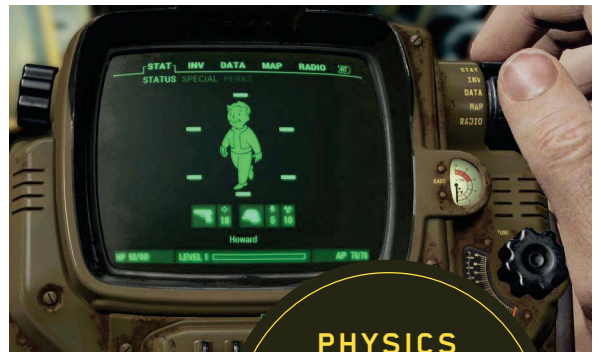
P

PERKS



Fallout's literally game-changing upgrades have received a miniature overhaul for the new entry. They remain a set of traits that range from the slyly clever (gender-based bonuses judged on your post-apocalyptic hotness) to the grotesque (delicious cannibalism), but how you attain perks has changed a tad.

Where previous games gave you a choice based on the level you'd attained, they're now attached directly to your SPECIAL stats. The only way of getting an advanced Perception perk is to improve your perception – and if you max out a stat from the start, you'll have access to its rarest perks immediately. Perks themselves now level up, meaning there are technically 275 to collect. More cosmetically, all the perks are now displayed as a little animated Vault Boy in a Fallout Shelter-like cross section. As if our collecting frenzy wasn't dangerously advanced enough, now this?



PHYSICS

Bits fall off of buildings, ghouls smash shopping trollies out of their way to get to you, bodies fly from exploded vehicles... Fun!

Q

QUIRKS



Fallout is, of course, unbelievably weird. That doesn't appear to have changed. Just look below! Footage matches cool-as-heck gunfights with Dead Rising levels of dress-up, and you can bet that the inevitable Wild Wasteland perk will bring another raft of hidden reference humour and crash-landed aliens to find.

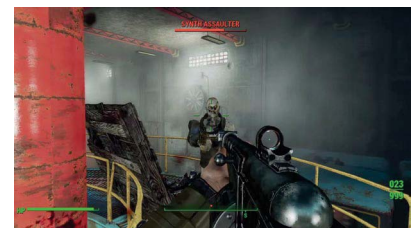


R

REFERENCES



Fallout 4 is slipping neatly into the series' story. Other games have made mention of Boston's Institute (a post-apocalyptic MIT), which we're now sure to visit. Trailers have also shown android enemies called Synthys – who we've met before, only in the form of two Fallout 3 NPCs. If you know your fake Fallout history, get excited right now.



THE A-Z OF FALLOUT 4

S

SOLE SURVIVOR



We've played as the Lone Wanderer and The Courier – now we're the Sole Survivor.

After the player-character enters Vault 111 as a nuke drops, 200 years pass, and they mysteriously emerge as the only relic of this particular Vault-Tec experiment.

We don't know much more beyond this, although we'd put money on the central quest being a search for some sign of their family. The auto-generated baby we mentioned is always called Shaun – why go to the trouble of creating facial tech and a name for a character who won't pop up again?



T

TRAPS



Fallout 4's environment is beginning to look like as much of an enemy as its rad-blasted inhabitants. A run through a town called

Lexington shows us booby-trapped raider encampments, and a plethora of explosive, interactive objects to accidentally set off in the middle of a battle.

But it's not one way traffic. Another section shows the player hacking into a supermarket's security system, activating a Protectron guard – which then fends off a pack of feral ghouls.

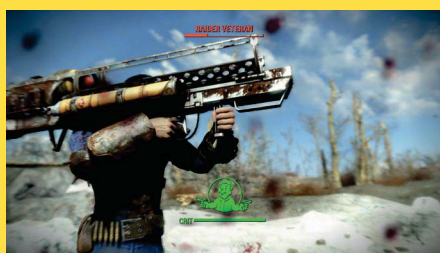
You can even turn the unlikely situations into handy ruses. Throwing out a flare grenade sees power-armoured Brotherhood Of Steel members arrive to lend a hand – but we see a player promptly shoot down the plane they came in on, turning it into an improvised bomb. The world's a dangerous place – you're just making it *more* dangerous.

U

USUAL SUSPECTS



Fallout got a lot right first (and second, and third, and... er... New Vegas-t) time, so there's a lot here we're already familiar with. Weapon types are broadly the same – kinetic, lasers, plasma, nukes – and many of the items look like basic texture upgrades, while hacking and lock-picking seem basically untouched.



VATS



Fallout's coolest combat trick might quietly also be its most-changed aspect. The system used to be a time-stop mechanic used to simulate the turn-based combat of old in a new FPS context. Now, however, it just slows things down to a crawl, meaning you're still under pressure, even as you line up percentage-rated shots. Don't expect to be magically killing a deathclaw with its talons inches from your face anymore.

As the shooter aspect of the game gets more in-depth, VATS clearly becomes too much of an advantage, so this change evens things up a tad. That said, its new guise has some handy bonuses. Switch it on as an enemy's exiting cover and you can watch those percentages change while they move, letting you wait it out for headshots, or pop the gun out of their hand as they raise it to fire.



VAULT TEC

The world's 'protector' always has cruel experiments in store. Our guess is that Vault 111 one keeps people from ageing.



Firing a gatling gun while zooming along on a low-flying Vertibird? Best take your dog, mate.

W WAR



Ron Perlman will insist that war never changes but *Fallout 4*, somewhat ironically, proves that it does. The new game puts far greater emphasis on the presence of rival factions – something you can use to your advantage.

We watch a player retreat as a group of ghouls crawl into a raider-packed room – then spectate from cover as they tear each other to pieces before mopping up the wounded leftovers and looting the place. Another situation sees them teaming up with evildoers to take out a rampaging super mutant. Natural enmity between groups should lead to a far more dynamic world than ever.

075

X

XENO BIOLOGY



The Wasteland is host to far more than mankind, and it seems the new setting of Boston has the same kinds of infestations as everywhere else. Enormous beasts such as deathclaws (monstrous Jackson chameleons engineered to replace human troops) and yao guai (mutated American black bears that pack a clawed-punch) still rampage, while unlucky ex-humans pop up as sad parodies of what they once were. But, surprisingly, it's the smaller beasts that have gotten *really* nasty.

Molerats and radscorpions can now burrow, popping up on your blindside to nip at your heels, while oversized mosquitos called bloodbugs land sickeningly on your chest to shove sharpened proboscises into your squishy innards. Basically, the whole place is still super gross, and needs an explosive extermination. Perfect.

Y

YET TO BE CONFIRMED..?



We're cheating here. The biggest question circling *Fallout 4* was whether PC mod support (confirmed for Xbox One) would also come to PS4. Just before our deadline we got the news we wanted: PS4 *will* be getting mods. Free updates are also promised, along with a Season Pass for meatier chunks of DLC content.



Z

ZERO HOUR



The game comes out on 10 November, after which time we predict that city streets will be eerily deserted, nature left to retake what once it ruled. The real mystery is whether that's because we're all playing it, or because someone pressed the big red button when copies sold out?



YOUR FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION MEMORIES

Over on p21 we shared some of our favourite memories from PlayStation history – now it's time for you to tell us yours



READER MEMORIES

I SPHINX THEREFORE I AM...
SORRY. I AM SORRY
TOMB RAIDER

The original Tomb Raider on the PS1. Gameplay second to none and amazing graphics. The underground Sphinx was breathtaking.

Paul James

TEN YEARS IN THE MAKING
FINAL FANTASY VIII

FFVIII was the defining experience of my PlayStation years. When I finally completed it, after a decade and at least 500 hours of trying, my ex sent me a congratulations card. Do you think I made a mistake?

Thomas Roy Edwards



All International Track & Field lacked was a cameo from gaming hero Daley Thompson...

BREAKING RECORDS
INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

My brother and I played International Track & Field on the PS1 so much that we could start the game on a new save and break all the records. We eventually couldn't beat our own records, admittedly...

Russ Dempsey

HAVING FUN WITH CHEATS
PANDEMONIUM!

My favourite PS1 memory was playing Pandemonium!, a pretty simple platformer but it meant a lot to me. It was the last game I really remember my dad playing and caring about. It was probably the first PS1 game I ever played, and I still remember printing off the cheat codes and taping them to the front of the instruction booklet. Most of my family can still remember the cheats HARDBODY and BORNFREE, which let you be invincible and have a level select.

Troy Macdonald



Ahnaf discovers the world of Team Ico is very different from the seasoned POV of a grizzled 13-year-old.



FINISHING THE GAME
SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

My favourite moment of the many I had with my beloved PS2 would be killing the final colossus in Shadow Of The Colossus. At the age of seven, I did not understand the inner meaning of the game itself and just did a speed run. However, after playing the game again at the age of thirteen, I was moved. I became a lifetime Team Ico fan, playing Ico at least seven times.

Ahnaf Amer Hossain

THE ANTI-WAR SENTIMENT
ACE COMBAT 4 AND 5

Ace Combat 4 and 5 hold such beautiful memories and nostalgia for me, regardless of them being flight sims. They had very deep and meaningful stories – for games about war, they are surprisingly anti-war, something newer war games could take inspiration from.

Ronan Albreicht Lim

SAMPLING THE IMPORT SCENE
WITH A GOOD NUMBER OF
NAMCO'S GREATEST
RAGE RACER

Indelible memory: going to Akihabara and buying a PlayStation with Rage Racer and Soul Edge.

Steven Sell

FAMILY BONDING
TIMESPLITTERS 2

My greatest memory is playing TimeSplitters 2 (always the Chinese restaurant level) with three family members using split-screen. Hours and hours of the greatest multiplayer shooter ever!

Paul Marson





The first Gran Turismo: if it were a human, it could now own a driving licence of its own.

SEEING IS BELIEVING GRAN TURISMO

One that sticks in my mind was setting eyes on Gran Turismo for the first time. It looked so real, pushing PlayStation beyond what I thought it could do – and this was from someone who preferred the N64. It sold the PS1 to me instantly.

Richard Jenkins

REALLY DRAGON IT OUT SPYRO THE DRAGON

Spyro was my first PlayStation game, and I spent hours replaying it to get every collectible. I still play it to this day. Bring us an HD version!

Dan Bradford

THE NEMESIS SYSTEM RESIDENT EVIL 3

For years Resident Evil 3 was my all-time favourite game: the Nemesis chasing Jill through Raccoon City relentlessly, and the rather sombre ending where [spoilers! – Ed]. I remember buying it on release day and running two miles home to play it! I got my PS1 for Christmas in 1998 – I've been loyal to Sony ever since.

Jason MacDonald

RIK MAYALL WAS IN IT! HOGS OF WAR

My favourite PlayStation 1 game was Hogs Of War. Totally comparable to Worms, but in Hogs Of War you could walk around a map and hear the pigs chant ridiculous things, which was amazing. Playing with friends in local multiplayer was phenomenal, and Rik Mayall was in it, which was obviously a wonderful bonus.

Ben Bubb

A SLIGHT MISUNDERSTANDING BY A THIRD PARTY... PLAYSTATION

I was in a park playing with my nine-year-old brother, and I went to a phone box to ring my Auntie. She said, "I have a surprise for you, I've got you a PlayStation," and I lent out of the phone box and screamed across the park, "DANIEL! WE'VE GOT A PLAYSTATION!" I walked back across the park, and this woman comes up to me and points her finger right in my face, saying, "How dare you, that's illegal. Ringing the Police Station! I have a good mind to report you and tell your parents!"

Andy Rutherford

UMBRELLA GETS UNDER YOUR SKIN RESIDENT EVIL 2

Resident Evil 2 was just life changing. I wasn't really that into games before seeing someone play it, and it left such an impression on me that I can still remember the code to unlock the safe in the Chief's office of Raccoon City Police Department some 17 years later (2236). I loved it so much that I got the Umbrella logo tattooed on my wrist, which will be turned into a full RE sleeve of baddies.

Stuart Stook Christ

PLATFORMING EASES THE PAIN CRASH BANDICOOT

How about the time I got the chicken pox, and had my bedroom TV and PS1 moved downstairs during the day? I played the original Crash Bandicoot outing, resisting the urge to scratch while being covered in cream. Hey, I didn't have to go to school, so the pain was worth it...

Andy Monaghan

A VERY PLAYSTATION CHRISTMAS THE PLAYSTATION BUNDLE

I asked Mum for a PlayStation, and woke up on Christmas day to a surprise – a PlayStation bundle, with Crash Bandicoot, Rage Racer and Tekken. My mum had spent the whole of Christmas Eve at Meadowhall and got the last one!

Karl Gent



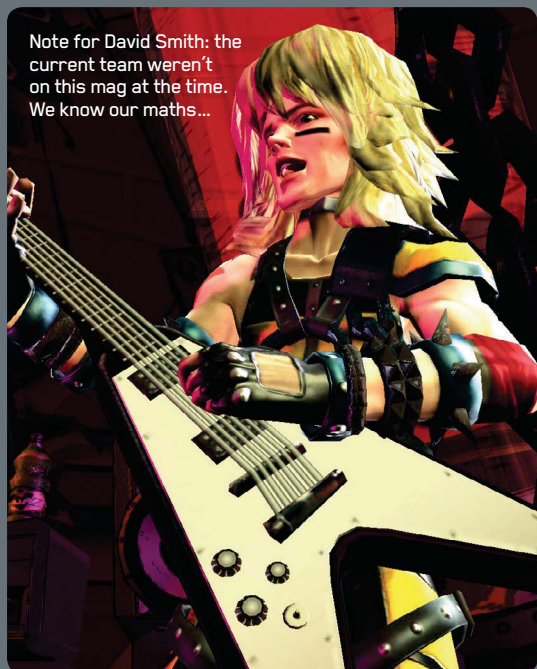
Remember that classic Red Dead finale, when everyone had a party with cake?

THAT ENDING RED DEAD REDEMPTION

On the PS3 it was Red Dead Redemption – I don't care what anyone says, Rockstar haven't made a better game before or since. The ending where [absolutely nothing bad happens – Revisionist Ed] would never have worked in Hollywood. It's still my favourite game of all time. The Last Of Us pushed it close though...

Jason MacDonald

READER MEMORIES



Note for David Smith: the current team weren't on this mag at the time. We know our maths...

A GREAT INJUSTICE IS COMMITTED
GUITAR HERO 2

How about the time I entered one of your competitions for Guitar Hero 2? The contest was to see who could get the highest score on Killing In The Name Of (no easy task because the song blows chunks and was as long as an elephant turd). I texted my entry and when the results were published I was miffed to see that the winner had a lower score than the one I sent in! The prize was not the point but I felt ultra shafted!

David Smith

MOTHER KNOWS BEST
TOMB RAIDER III

My favourite PS1 memory is coming home to find my mother setting the console up. She'd put Tomb Raider III in, and that picture of the loading screen before the main menu is burnt into my mind. We bonded playing it together; many evenings after school, we'd solve puzzles and get chewed on by piranhas or destroyed by spike walls. It's still our favourite game. In fact, I bought the special edition of Tomb Raider 2014 for her on Mother's Day.

Gemma Adams

THE VERY BEST BIRTHDAY
PRESENT IMAGINABLE
PSONE

It was my fifth birthday, and I got my PSOne after long dreaming of wanting to get my hands on my brother's console. I have a rough time remembering it, but my parents remember it like it was yesterday: the joy on my face that would be passed on to today as an 18-year-old!

Sondre Huhtala

CEREAL HIT AND RUNS
THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

The first PlayStation game I ever played was MediEvil. I was about five or six years old, and absolutely loved it (despite not being as good at it as I am now). A few years later, at ten years of age, I got my own PlayStation 2 and had a fair few games on it, The Simpsons: Hit & Run being my favourite. I remember waking up early on a Saturday morning just to play it, with a bowl of cereal in my lap.

Jack Gazzard

HIDING BEHIND THE SOFA
RESIDENT EVIL

I remember being five and my sister was eight. We found our dad's copy of Resident Evil and turned it on. Thanks to the camera angles, every single time we'd enter a new room, we'd leg it across the sitting room and hide behind the couch. If we didn't actually die, we'd go to the next room. Rinse and repeat.

Cal Nash



How many hours has the team lost to the Tekken series? A shameful number...

TEKKEN YOUR TIME
TEKKEN

Pass-the-controller, winner-stays-on Tekken tournaments with my dad and sister. We used to have such a laugh and play for hours on end.

Emmalee Krzesinska

YOUR FIRST EXPOSURE
TO A JRPG
FINAL FANTASY VII

I didn't realise how grand in scope — and how large in size — it was having never played a genuine JRPG before. About ten hours in, and after being stunned on numerous occasions, I knew I was playing something special.

Chris McGilvray

THAT NEW CONSOLE SMELL
PLAYSTATION 4

My favourite memory? When the PS4 arrived at my door on the day of release. I took it inside the house and opened the box, and the beautiful smell of newness hit me. It gleamed with beauty, and as soon as I saw it I fell in love. Nothing has ever given me this much happiness (apart from my mum obviously). I love you PS4!

Mati Lyko

TAKING DOWN AN
ALIEN OVERLORD
CRASH TEAM RACING

My favourite PS1 memory was finally defeating Nitrous Oxide on Crash Team Racing. It was the first game I completed, and the elation of overtaking the smug alien overlord and crossing the finish line was absolutely brilliant. Naughty Dog has never let me down since.

Luke Hambly



Completing a FF game has always been right up there with getting married or buying a jumbo jet. Epochal.

A NOT-SO-FINAL FANTASY FFVII AND FFXIII

My PS1 memory has to be completing Final Fantasy VII for the first time, and then finding out that FFXIII was just round the corner. Completing it was such an awesome feeling — but the best thing about it was the ability to come home from the bullying I got at school, lock myself away in my room, be taken to another place and put everything bad behind me.

Andrew Kyrillou



Oh, the many memories of wrecking white picket fences and losing hubcaps...

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION DRIVER

There are plenty of in-game moments I could choose from, but for me it would be walking home from work on a hot July day in 1999 to play Driver before going to the pub. As I played it, I remember hearing the same police sirens coming from a dozen open windows on our street.

Matt Barlow

GIVING YOUR LUNGS A WORKOUT SINGSTAR

When all my friends gathered in my house and we played Gran Turismo 4, Burnout 3: Takedown, God Of War, or we just used to sing our hearts out in SingStar. Those memories will never fade awaaaaay...

Michal Adam Pawlowski

COMPETING IN A LOCAL TOURNAMENT TEKKEN

When the game first came out on the very first PlayStation, we had a grand Tekken tournament in our local game shop in Newton Abbot. A couple of mates and I took part against all these other geeks... Which included our school-year colleague Justin Calvert (ex-Gamespot editor and former OPM writer back in the day). I remember kicking butt aplenty with Paul Phoenix's ten-string combos until I got the shakes and eventually crumbled. What a buzz, though. I can't believe that was 20 years ago...

Jon Rea

SEPHIROTH ALWAYS WAS FULL OF HOT AIR FINAL FANTASY VII



Playing my brand new copy of FFXIII on my brand new inflatable chair that I got for Christmas. I think that ruined my sleeping pattern for life.

Kelly Owen

HUNGRY, HUNGRY HIPPOS CRASH BANDICOOT 2

Whenever you got to a certain jump in Crash Bandicoot 2, you had to jump on two hippos and a sinking and rising podium. I could never make the jump and always had to get Mum to do it. After wasting all my lives, and having only one left, I asked for help, but everyone was busy so I took the controller and went for it, and to five-year-old me's surprise I actually made it! Small achievement to everyone else, but life-changing to me at the time! Actually still life-changing as, because of my Crash Bandicoot-filled childhood, I have decided to study game design, so I can hopefully recreate the magic for someone else like Naughty Dog did for me.

Scott Bell





THE 20 WORST MOMENTS IN PLAYSTATION HISTORY



We all made mistakes before we turned 20. OPM looks back on the less fond PlayStation memories that we'd all rather forget

We love PlayStation. That's why we're here and why you're reading our 20th anniversary issue with a party horn clamped firmly between your teeth. Yes, that's what it's called, get your head out of the gutter. However, as we all know,

nothing is perfect, even PlayStation – stop sniggering, you at the back – and so in between our wild celebrations this month it's only fair to acknowledge our lesser minutes.

From toe-curling marketing missteps to console catastrophes, join us on a traumatic trip down

memory lane to have a gander at the moments we wish we could fix for good with a time machine.

Safety note: if it all gets too embarrassing and awkward, feel free to use the rest of this month's magazine as some kind of celebratory mask to hide your red face. Good luck.

01

SERIOUSLY HACKED OFF

By far the darkest time to be a PlayStation owner, those 23 long days without PSN in April and May of 2011 are an unfortunate blot on Sony's history. Word of 77 million compromised accounts didn't help things much, despite some great games in the 'Welcome Back' pack (ah LittleBigPlanet 2, how we love you so). Add in the literal Nightmare Before Christmas when hackers took down PSN for four days from 24 December last year and PSN's had a couple of rocky patches over the years that we pray are never repeated in the future.

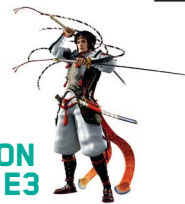


GAME OF SHAME

Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust garnered a mighty 1/10 from us: "Burn this. It's the only way to be sure."

02

GIANT CRAB ON THE MENU AT E3

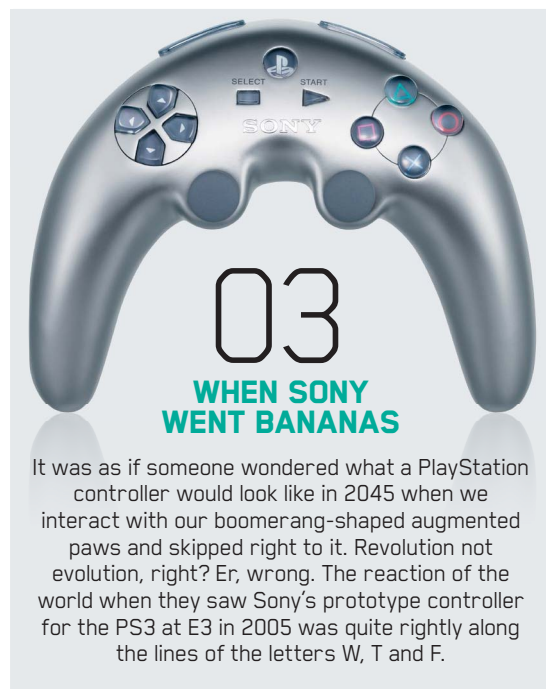


Nothing is more meme-worthy or cringeworthy than Sony's E3 performance back in 2006. Meant to be the big year for PS3, instead all most of us remember is the unfortunate crustacean incident. Taking time to assure the world of Genji: Days of the Blade's roots in genuine Japanese history and the recreation of "famous battles which actually took place," producer Bill Ritch hit start on his demo and, without a hint of irony, revealed a "giant enemy crab" leaping into battle. Add in the sentence "attack its weak point for massive damage," and the exorbitant first retail price for the console itself, and this is an E3 we'd all rather just forget.

03

WHEN SONY WENT BANANAS

It was as if someone wondered what a PlayStation controller would look like in 2045 when we interact with our boomerang-shaped augmented paws and skipped right to it. Revolution not evolution, right? Er, wrong. The reaction of the world when they saw Sony's prototype controller for the PS3 at E3 in 2005 was quite rightly along the lines of the letters W, T and F.



04

RIP WIPEOUT

Why, Sony, why? Ex Psygnosis dev Studio Liverpool being shuttered back in 2012 still makes us feel all empty and sad inside. Responsible for so many joyous dance music-fuelled anti-gravity memories on *every PlayStation console ever* we can't help but feel it's not current-gen without at least pretending we can take on a time trial with a Piranha ship.



WORST MOMENTS



MOVE OVER

Despite it meaning we had an excuse to buy that ridiculous Sharp Shooter peripheral for House Of The Dead: Overkill it took an awful long time for Move to get us all, er, moving. More like patiently reconfiguring and then frantically waggling. And that Ubisoft spanking sim We Dare? Ugh! Thankfully this is a redemption tale – not just because of Sportsfriends' PS4 brilliance, but because Morpheus will revive Move next year.



GAME OF SHAME

Basement Crawl on PS4 isn't even deserving of its 27 score on Metacritic. We gave it two too many.

06

WHEN WE HAD COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

Don't want someone to have something? Word to the wise; don't give it to them first and then take it away.

Whether you're one or 31, it still hurts, Sony. Removing the backwards compatibility of the original PS3s might have been essential to bring down console pricing in the long run, but we're still sore about losing access to our games library.



07

SONY'S MOD-NATION

Despite sounding pretty gosh darned illegal, it's not always been against the law for people to circumvent copyright law and 'chip' their favourite consoles. Cue much chaos for Sony as the UK banned PS2 chipping in 2004 but other countries such as Italy didn't budge and said consumers could do what they wanted. Ouch.

08

HOME ON THE STRANGE

Will you make the broken Home gag first or shall we?

Meant to revolutionise our PS3 experience, the unfortunate Second Life-alike never quite lived up to expectations with its empty open spaces and sledgehammer marketing techniques. Sadly it never really left its 2008 Beta and despite 31 million users buying PlayStation printed pixelated T-shirts (and decorating their virtual Venetian Assassin hideouts) there have been no more trips Home since the servers shut down in March. Oh well, we've got Destiny for dancing like a fool with strangers now.



Home still has fans out there. Are you one of them?

09

SHUT UP AND DRIVECLUB

It's far more than just roadworthy now and well deserving of its 9/10 score, but Driveclub's launch was an exercise in how not to release a current-gen online title. Server issues plagued the game from day one and it took a number of patches to finally get players behind the online wheel. Hopefully as developers learn more about PS4, we can avoid these pretty embarrassing issues in future.



Speeding round Driveclub's tracks solo was a tad sad.

10

LAUNCH GAME CATASTROPHES

Let's face it. For every TimeSplitters and Ridge Racer, there's an Orphen: Scion Of Sorcery and a (PS3) Sonic The Hedgehog. There's nothing worse than taking your brand new console home only to discover that the disc of the accompanying game you shelled out £50 for would be better used as a coaster. At least the giant enemy crab starrer itself, Genji: Days Of The Blade, gave us a laugh during E3. Oh, let's not even get started on Little Deviants...

11

A (DUAL)SHOCKING AFFAIR

Ah yes, remember when rumble, the great 'last generation feature' according to the then-Sony president Phil Harrison, just *wasn't there* for two whole years after the launch of PS3? Apparently 'incompatible' with the Sixaxis motion controls - the ones we use all the time now - DualShock was eventually made a permanent feature after a legal battle was put to bed.



WORST MOMENTS

12

WHEN PSP GO BECAME PSP NO

Now, don't get us wrong, we love PS Vita and only have fond memories of hours of Patapon on PSP, but when it comes to certain versions of our favourite portable consoles, even we have to admit crushing defeat. Sure, 2009's PSP Go's sliding screen function was a bit cool in the '00s but, er, where do the UMDs go and *why is it only £50 cheaper than a PS3?*

Pricing hurdles and a digital download-only format meant the cute little device didn't exactly fly off shelves. Perhaps it's best not to get started on the 2011 PSP-E1000's complete lack of Wi-Fi capabilities or how no one ever found a use for PS Vita's 3G function when we discovered you couldn't actually play games online with it.



13

BAN THIS SICK (DECAPITATED) FILTH

Neither OPM nor Sony's finest hour, a publicity event for God Of War II wasn't quite in the best of tastes as it partied around a freshly decapitated goat. The event also allowed guests to see how much pre-cooked warm offal they could eat from inside its stomach. Add in naked girls, live snakes and the involvement of The Mail On Sunday and everyone involved should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves...

GAME OF SHAME

Remember when there was Little Britain: The Video Game on PS2? We wish we didn't. Comedy? Misery.



14

SKYRIM OR FLIP BOOK?

It was the game of the year. Except if you had a PS3. In which case, Elder Scrolls V could become a laggy, stuttering mess.

Problems with the way the game dealt with memory on PS3 meant that there was a potential risk that the bigger your save got, the more the game slowed to a crawl. Framerates could drop into single figures and, despite Bethesda's best efforts, it took more than a couple of patches to fix and a serious delay on the excellent Dawnguard and Dragonborn DLC.



15

BAD CELL RECEPTION

PS3 just didn't have a terribly good start in life. The first time a console had ever used the unique Sony developed Cell processor - designed for the superior performance unlocked by studios such as Naughty Dog - meant that development was largely hindered rather than enhanced. While balance was eventually restored, it meant inferior performance across some early multiplatform releases.



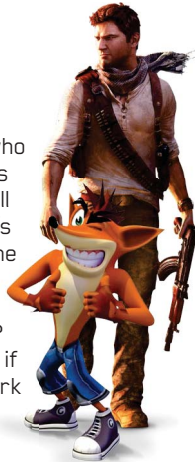
The sublime Bayonetta wasn't quite as sublime on PS3.

16

THE MASCOT THAT NEVER WAS



Most people might not know who Toro Inoue is but at least he's managed to hold on to the full time job of being PlayStation's mascot in Japan. Meanwhile the role here is still very much up for grabs after a fifth of a century. Is it Crash? Spyro? Sackboy? Kratos? Nate? Lara if she hadn't gone over to the dark side? Maybe if they fought it out in one big brawl...



17

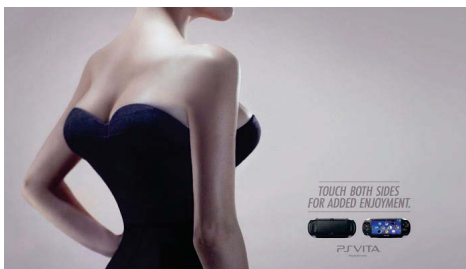
NOT A KIND OF MAGIC

Those few minutes must have felt like years to the poor woman sitting on a rug on-stage for Sony's awkward E3 2012 demo of Wonderbook's Book Of Spells. Despite boasting all-new Rowling content (worth its weight in Galleons, surely) the demo was long, gruelling and at one point the stage lighting messed with the camera. If only she could have waved her wand and appeared.

18

MARKETING MADNESS

PlayStation is famous for its brave, bold advertising. Unfortunately brave doesn't always mean good and we've had a slew of ads we could have done without, including a female doctor asking if we're afraid "we do it too much" in our bedrooms (no, we need to get a Wi-Fi extender for Remote Play to reach) and the woman unfortunate enough to have breasts on her front and back in a French ad to promote the benefits of two touchable surfaces on PS Vita. Don't think men get off lightly, either. A PS3 ad in 2008 saw a rather vital organ happily replaced with a thumb. Oh, you're welcome.



WAHEEEY! Ar0000000000ga. Hubba hubba. *gunshot*

WORST MOMENTS

19

DON'T LIGHT UP OUR LIFE

It turns out that yellow isn't just a warning sign when it comes to snow. Overheating issues in early PS3 consoles meant a higher chance of a console-killing shutdown, which became fondly known as the Yellow Light Of Death. It could be repaired but sending a console to Sony meant losing every single one of those hard earned frog-slaying hours in MGS4. The injustice still hurts.

20

WHEN BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS GO SOUR

It was our party and we'll damn well cry if we want to. All those beautiful limited edition 20th Anniversary PS4s ready for adoring fans and the internet became a sea of profiteering as they were snapped up immediately by hungry resellers. Want one? That'll be £3,000 on eBay please. Is nothing sacred?



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A SEIKO MGS V: THE PHANTOM PAIN WATCH

Become an honorary Diamond Dog with this ultra-rare swag



WIN!



Ten. That's the big juicy number we've lovingly slapped on MGS V: The Phantom Pain. So what better way to celebrate than by wearing your very own piece of exclusive memorabilia? Designed by Japanese watch giants Seiko and Kojima Productions, this rad retro timepiece (number 1403 of just 2,500) could be yours.

For a chance to win this Seiko NextAge MGS V: TPP Collaboration watch, just head to www.futurecomps.co.uk/MGSSeiko and answer this question before 30 Oct:

Who took over voiceover duties for Snake in 2013?

- A)** Troy Baker
- B)** Kiefer Sutherland
- C)** Peter Dinklage



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REVIEWS



102 MAD MAX

Max Rockatansky's long journey to PlayStation is finally over, but can his interactive wasteland bring the Fury to the road?

OPM SCORES

GOLD AWARD

PlayStation
Official Magazine - UK

GOLD AWARD

Awarded to a game that's brilliantly executed on every level, combining significant innovation, near-flawless gameplay, great graphics and lasting appeal.

EDITOR'S AWARD

PlayStation
Official Magazine - UK

EDITOR'S AWARD

Not at the very highest echelon, but this is a game that deserves recognition and special praise based on its ambition, innovation or other notable achievement.

10 INCREDIBLE

The kind of phenomenal experience rarely seen in a console generation.

9 OUTSTANDING

Unreservedly brilliant - this should be in every collection.

8 VERY GOOD

A truly excellent game, marred by just a few minor issues.

7 GOOD

A great concept unfulfilled or the familiar done well, but still well worth playing.

6 DECENT

Fun in parts, flawed in others, but more right than wrong.

5 AVERAGE

What you expect and little more, this is for devotees only.

4 BELOW AVERAGE

Any bright ideas are drowning in a sea of bugs or mediocrity.

3 POOR

A seriously flawed game with little merit on any level.

2 AWFUL

Disgraceful: the disc would be more beneficial as a coaster.

1 HORRIFIC

Own this and you'll be swiftly, justifiably, exiled from society.

CONTENTS

TEARAWAY UNFOLDED 92 | PES 2016 96 | GROW HOME 98 | ZOMBI 99 | SUPER TIME FORCE ULTRA 100 | MAD MAX 102 | MADDEN NFL 16 106 | DISNEY INFINITY 3.0 107 | TALES FROM THE BORDERLANDS S1E4: ESCAPE PLAN BRAVO 108 | I AM BREAD 108 | VOLUME 109



Media Molecule has made full use of DualShock 4, including using the light bar to act as a torch.



"TEARAWAY'S WORLD IS ESSENTIALLY ONE BIG DIORAMA, WHICH IS EXPERTLY ASSEMBLED AND UNFOLDED AROUND YOU."

EDITOR'S
AWARDPlayStation
Official Magazine - UK

MONSTER MACHE

@tomdavidsykes

TEARAWAY
UNFOLDEDThis expanded remaster is
worth the paper it's printed on

INFO
 FORMAT PS4
 ETA OUT NOW
 PUB SONY
 DEV MEDIA
 MOLECULE

There's a real satisfaction in leaving your mark on a game, whether it's by playing dress-up with your Saints Row avatar, building a treehouse in Minecraft, or engineering a creative kill in Hitman.

Tearaway took that to another level back in 2013, transforming your PS Vita into a portal between the game world and, well, you. You made that game what it was, by adorning its charming characters with assorted homemade decorations, taking selfies with the Squirrel King and breathing into the mic to bring a world of paper flapping to life. You did a pretty great job, so cheers for that.

Tearaway Unfolded takes a different shape on PS4, but its message remains the same. Once again, you're guiding an adorable walking envelope by the name of Atoi (or Iota) on her (or his) quest to deliver a vital missive to the You. The You is, erm, you: OPM's secret favourite reader who's currently enjoying this issue in a doctor's waiting room, or on the loo. Don't forget to wash those hands.

Your ultimate goal in this papercraft adventure is to shepherd Atoi throughout the world using DualShock 4's Sixaxis functions (the light bar represents the beacon-like power of sunlight), the analogue sticks and buttons, and, last but not least, the surprisingly versatile touchpad.

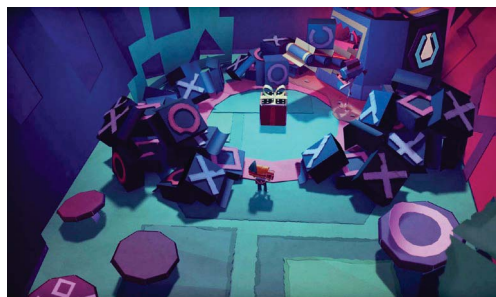
SCRAPHEAP CHALLENGE

Without these features, Tearaway would be a much different, much lesser entity. It's a game of constant communication between the player and Atoi, the manner of input frequently changing to match the environment and to ensure the edges of your lips are regularly curled upwards. One minute you're firing pumpkins from the innards of your DualShock 4, the next you're unfurling





Right This paper airplane section is remarkable. I'd love to see it expanded into its own game.



Left You can nab hidden red presents right away, while blue ones open after certain quests.

» banners with the touchpad to form makeshift platforms over deadly pits. Things soon become even more interesting and surprising than that – but I won't say how as you should really discover those moments for yourself.

Nominally, this is a platform game: an action-adventure featuring puzzles, timing and reflex-based action sequences, and nearly consequence-free combat against Scraps (little inter-dimensional foes made out of newspaper). Tearaway is often described as an easy game, but I died plenty during the hectic combat or demanding action bits, and it wasn't *always* my fault. While the third-person camera is fine for the most part, control is occasionally wrestled out from you in a way that doesn't necessarily benefit platforming (or that obscures Atoi's beaming mug behind a massive tree). It's hard to appreciate the charming whimsy of Media Molecule's handcrafted world when you've tumbled off the same ledge four times in a row.

I say this now really to get it out of the way, as there is more than enough joy here to make up

for a few frustrations with the navigational camera. Tearaway's world is essentially one big diorama, which is expertly assembled and unfolded around you. This paper theme isn't simply a gimmick: it's the heart of the game, and Unfolded's various puzzles, tools, toys and activities essentially bleed this heart for all it's worth.

You'll slap cutout hats, eyes and mouths on forest animals. You'll draw butterflies and snowflakes, then see them appear in the environment as physical things. And, most importantly of all, you'll snap photos, selfies and even GIFs using Atoi's little camera.

SNAP HAPPY

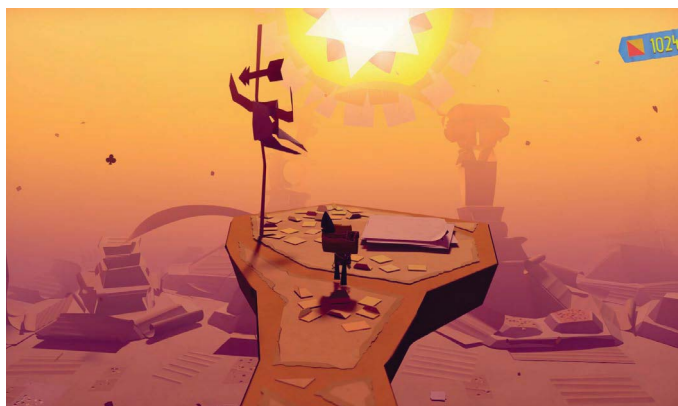
Tearaway's fancy camera toy has been embellished in this PS4 version, just as the game itself has been extended with a range of additional areas and quests. There are a bunch of lenses and filters to muck around with, along with a

special GIF lens that enables you to make looping, Twitter-friendly animations. But perhaps the most enjoyable tool of all is the new tripod.

With the tripod in tow, you can now set the camera down and lark about in front of it as Atoi, pulling poses with the D-pad or battling enemies as the stationary viewfinder looks on. Your silly pics and clips will sometimes appear inside the world, in frames or on cinema screens, and it's a uniquely strange and magical feeling when this happens. (It is, of course, possible to upload and share your creations online.)

However, Unfolded's most surprising addition is its extra landmass. Several areas have been expanded considerably, most notably the seaside village known as Coggage Cove. This town of goggle-eyed merfolk now houses a collection of paper airplanes, which Atoi can assemble, hop on and fly over the vellum sea.

"IT'S SIMPLY THRILLING TO FLY FROM ISLAND TO ISLAND IN SEARCH OF TREASURE."



Above It's full of genuinely pretty locations, each using the paper theme to great effect. D'aww.

Right There are several hub areas full of extra quests. Be prepared to hunt for them.



Above In addition to the crafting tools, there's a huge shop filled with extra bits.

This new vehicle handles extremely well (you direct it with gusts of air made by swiping on the touchpad), and it's thrilling to fly from island to island in search of treasure. It's not a huge part of the game, but it's easily one of the highlights of the entire eight-ten hour adventure, and the most obvious reason for seasoned Tearaway fans to consider this re-release if the increased texture resolution and fancier-looking visual effects weren't enough.

PAPER CHASE

DualShock 4 has *almost* enough features for Unfolded to replicate the PS Vita game, but the lack of a native mic and camera means certain functions have been shunted to the load-bearing touchpad. Swiping it to blow wind makes some sense, but using it to draw shapes feels clumsy. I'm nagged a few times to plug in a camera or to use the new companion

app, and it is a slight shame that not everything is at my fingertips here, as it was with the original. Unless you make use of these options you obviously won't be able to import real-world photos, something that was an integral element to the PS Vita version.

But it's a small gripe. Media Molecule, more than any other dev, makes games that fit snugly into its platforms, and here it's maximised nearly every feature PS4 has to offer. It's enough to bring Tearaway's stunning handmade world bursting back to life, with renewed vigour and in glorious high resolution. The result? One of the most personal, inspiring games you'll ever play.

VERDICT

This comprehensive remaster of the PS Vita original is bigger and more beautiful than its previous handheld form, with only a few concessions made along the way to make it fit. **Tom Sykes**

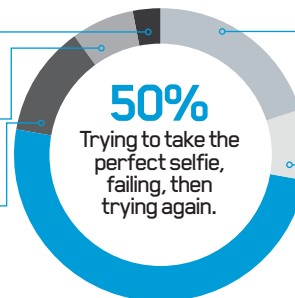
THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... TEARAWAY UNFOLDED

3% Wishing you had a talent for papercraft in real life.

7% Making terrible objects by drawing clumsily on the touchpad.

12% Redrawing those same objects because your first efforts were so embarrassing.



20% Jumping over stuff and defeating enemies – this is still a game, after all.

8% Using DualShock 4's light bar like a broom to tidy up the place.

ALSO ON PLAYSTATION VITA

The original is the truer vision for the series with fingers-through-the-back hijinks and plenty of tactile handheld delights. But while clearly cut from the same cloth (or, er, ream), both iterations are worth playing to appreciate the differences.

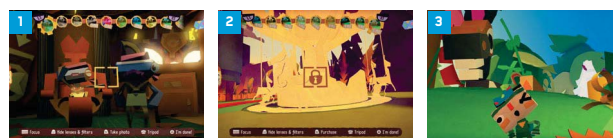


MULTIPLAYER



A second player can now join in by using the companion app and a compatible tablet. They can decorate Atoi and customise the world in real-time, using their device's camera (if they have one) to texture the ground or to import selfies into the game.

HOW TO... TAKE THE PERFECT PHOTO



1 There are plenty of funny or bizarre events happening in the world. Seek them out. **2** You can customise your shot with various filters and lenses, purchased using collectable confetti. Go for a moody mono-chrome shot, or snap more of the environment with a wide-angle lens. **3** If you want to get in on the action, plonk the camera onto a tripod and strike a pose. Once you've taken a picture, you might be surprised by where it ends up. Your holiday snaps will often appear in the game...

IS IT BETTER THAN?



YES

LBP 3 has more of a creative edge, yes, but Unfolded offers the better story for people who just want to play.



NO

This has Tearaway beat when it comes to making stuff. In the 'Craft' you can create an entire world.



YES

The Infinity games offer fun Toy Boxes, but Tearaway's laughs-per-minute count is too high.

PES can't compete with FIFA 16's stadium count, but the 22 that are here look sumptuous.



096

NEYMAR PUNS PLEASE

@GameGriffin



PES 2016

A successful title defence? It's looking likely...

PES didn't have much to celebrate last generation. As sure as Jim White's deadline day tie is yellow, and Kammy will yell "Unbelievable Jeff!" half a dozen times on any given Soccer Saturday, PS3-era PES followed a pattern of 'promising' preview stage showings to 'alright' final code to 'maybe next year, lads?' legacies. Thank heavens for PS4, then.

Should you be the kind of fan who appreciates a deft bit of overlooked Iniesta footwork just as much as a no-nonsense Charlie Adam wallop, PES 2016 feels like *total* football. It's in part down to the huge bank of fresh animations that triples last year's number. Players handle every conceivable situation naturally, like adjusting their feet to kill an awkward bobbling pass or hooking their leg mid-turn to clear a wayward cross, and blend convincingly between actions.

While playing as Arsenal early on, there's a moment Sanchez, in one seamless motion, traps the ball with his chest, rides a tackle and smoothly transitions from stagger to volley. It sails over the bar of course because I suck, but this three-second snippet is so authentic I'm compelled to watch the replay.

PES 2016 is *full* of these incidents. Players act like their real world counterparts, each utilising up to ten specific styles. Suárez for instance has



INFO
FORMAT PS4
ALSO ON PS3
ETA OUT NOW
PUB KONAMI
DEV PES
PRODUCTIONS

'fighting spirit', 'incisive runs' and 'acrobatic finishing', which enable him to make his mark on the pitch. Superstars such as mazy Messi and feeder Fàbregas all feel like true individuals this year.

Positively bursting with a range of new shots, passes, saves and challenges, the initial downside is that matches can feel a tad too unpredictable, like you're not sure what your men will do next. You absolutely can't survive on last year's tactics, although tackling is now easier and punishes you less for mistimed lunges.

PHWOAR PHWOAR TOO

New animations are abundant, but it's the way in which they're implemented that really

shines. Everything feels natural, and no longer like the game's struggling to match your inputs to the 'best-fit' motions that live deep in the code.

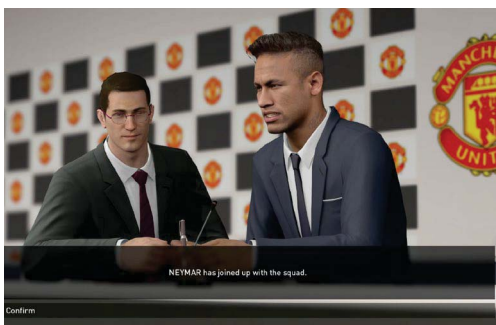
But don't think that PES 2016 succeeds just because of how its players move. This is a smart, tactical effort, with enough in-game options to fill several large whiteboards. You can set instructions when in possession and launch them with the D-pad to trigger explosive counter-attacks down flanks, or maintain rigid formations for rapid short balls.

There are separate parameters for defending, too, such as setting containment areas and defensive lines. Usually I like to apply frontline hassle, but in one nail-biting

"SUPERSTARS SUCH AS MESSI AND FÀBREGAS FEEL MORE DEFINED THAN EVER BEFORE."

Right This is about number four on the list of things that would never, ever happen.

Below All those fluid animations give midfield battles a new artful depth.



Above The attention to detail off the pitch really does make all the difference.

clash as Manchester United against Juventus I'm forced to park the bus by moving the line deep with ←, switching from conservative to full-on pressure, and ordering hefty Fellaini to mark danger man Pogba. Dull screen layouts make arranging preset tactics a chore, but a rewarding one when the entire team follows your lead like a Roman emperor.

A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

Alongside customizable leagues and cups is the UEFA Champions League and Europa League, which don't quite absolve a dearth of other major licenses. Presentation is utterly faithful though: goal celebrations prompt euphoric scorers to interact with crowds, and career mode features press conferences and more.

Speaking of which, Master League returns. Its all-singing, all-dancing new form feels more like a reskin than a total overhaul, with a few quirks

that are oddly detached from the sport. (In what world do Neymar and Bale join Man Utd for £30 million each?)

Meanwhile in Become A Legend, you control a single existing or created player, and although competing for manager approval and maintaining your condition is engaging, opponents are so smart and allow so little time on the ball that it's marmite.

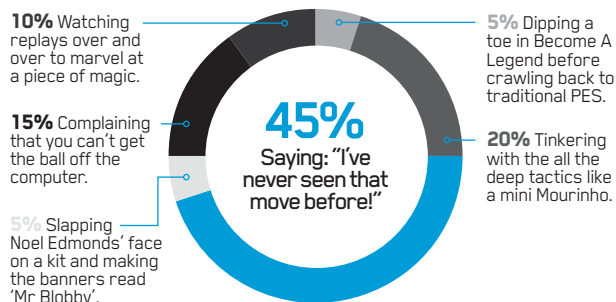
But tight fundamentals are key to any sports title, and with its core game PES Productions nails every flick and flourish. With killer presentation, lashings of strategy and organic animations, PES is better now than it has been in years.

VERDICT

PES Productions captures the fundamental mechanics of football to deliver a multi-tiered experience that works as both an arcade kickabout and a tactically broad sim. PS4's best footy game yet. **Ben Griffin**

THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... PES 2016

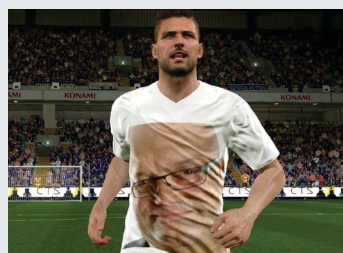


SECOND OPINION SUFFERING LIVERPOOL FAN



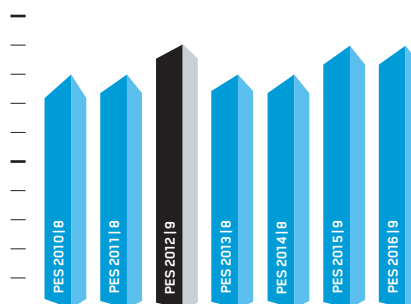
So it's official, last year's game wasn't a fluke. PES really is back to where it belongs: at the top of the league. And thanks to the much-needed image and option file import features, I'll no longer have to settle for Merseyside Red, either. This trumps everything the series has offered since the heady ISS Pro days. **Matthew Pellett**

HOW TO... IMPORT PICS FOR CRAZY KITS



PES featured picture import before, but it's never been simpler. Just create a folder on a USB named WEPES, fill it with JPGs and PNGs, then paste them onto strips. Behold - it's none other than MasterChef's Gregg Wallace. Buttery biscuit bases all round.

SERIESOGRAPHY



While we liked it, 2012 offered a very different type of footy more like Sunday League than 2016's Champions League quality.

IS IT BETTER THAN?



YES

With three times as many animations, sharper presentation and more tactical options, 2016 wins out.



YES

FIFA 16 wasn't made available to us this issue, but PES 2016 nutmegs last year's FIFA with ease.

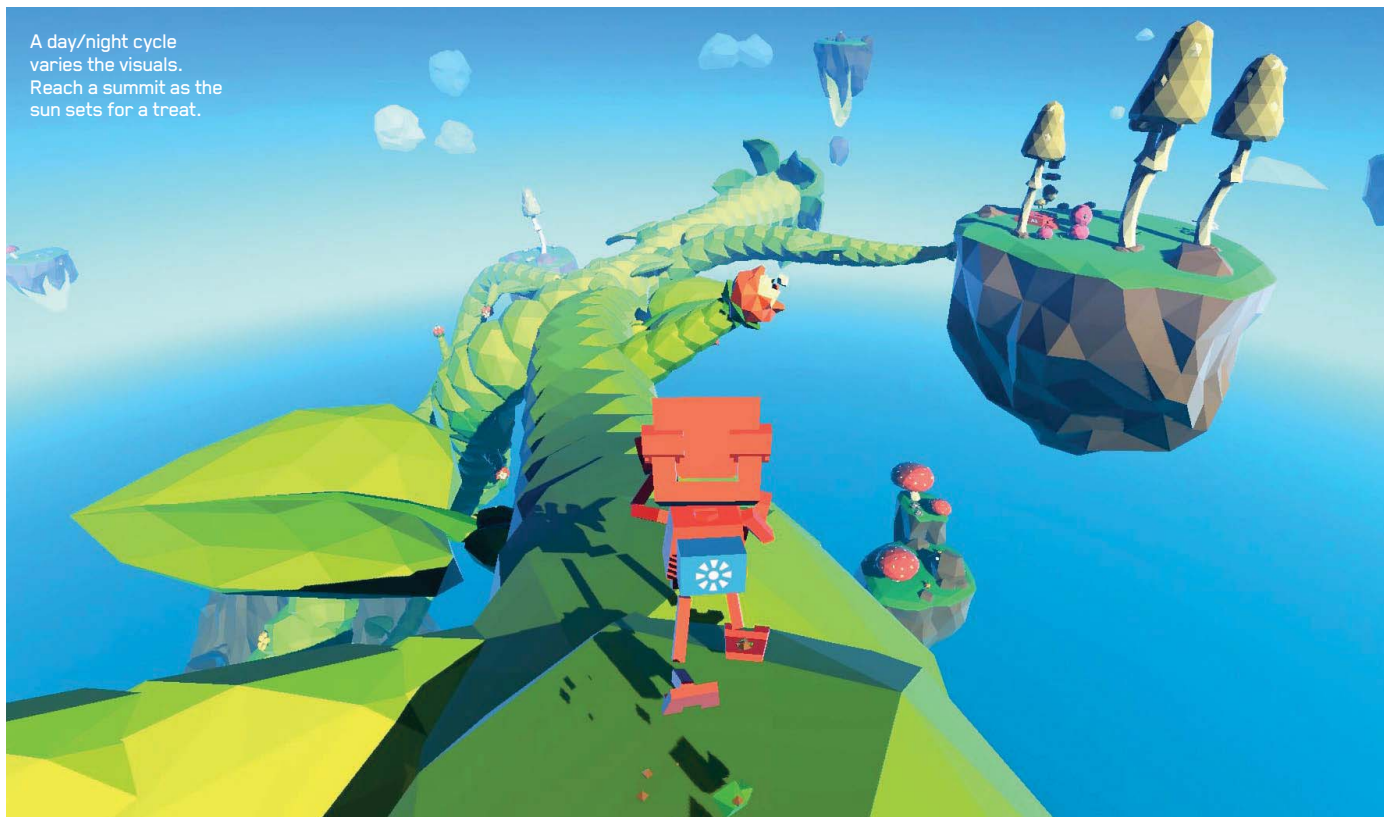


YES

PSN's current footy game of choice is a star, but barrel-rolling motors lose out to Neymar's silky skills.



A day/night cycle varies the visuals. Reach a summit as the sun sets for a treat.



CLIFFCLANGER

@GameGriffin



GROW HOME

Do it for the vine. And the leaves. And the rocks



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB UBISOFT
DEV UBISOFT
REFLECTIONS

Were Assassin's Creed's heroes to move like Ubisoft's latest courageous climber, a Botanical Utility Droid (BUD), they'd bring shame upon the Brotherhood. But in BUD's defence, scaling stuff in Grow Home is a blast.

During a three-hour adventure initially produced by eight people as little more than an in-house experiment, BUD must oxygenise his world by growing a star plant and bringing its valuable seeds to his orbiting mothership, MOM. And rather than the usual effort-free videogame clamber that involves little more than holding a direction on the stick, here you clasp BUD's hands independently with **L2** and **R2**.

You can latch onto any surface at any angle, from skinny horizontal beams to arching concave domes. Since letting go of the triggers means relinquishing your grip, you'll never clutch a controller harder than when glancing queasily at the ground's faint form 2,000 dizzying metres below. The world is yours to explore.

Constructed from boldly coloured but low-poly geometry, said world doesn't seem much at first, but views improve as you ascend. Spirals of

vines swirl through the milky atmosphere, a majestic ringed waterfall cascades roaring blue torrents, and colourful blooms sprout all over the shop.

BUDDING HERO

But how do you reach distant islands? With plant shoots. Press **Ⓐ** when you're at the tip of one to ride the tendril towards energy rocks. When hit, these swell your star plant to stratospheric sizes. There's a limit to how far shoots extend, so the main portion of Grow Home involves snaking your vine outwards, running back along it, and straddling another.

MOM's set an optional mission, however: collect flora and fauna samples. Cue BUD's inherently humorous range of motions as he grabs dodos by the beaks, positions his legs to shift sheep, and generally stumbles around like a silent master of slapstick. And it's not just physical comedy — MOM sometimes messages things such as "I've just made a GIF of you falling off things. It's rather fun!"

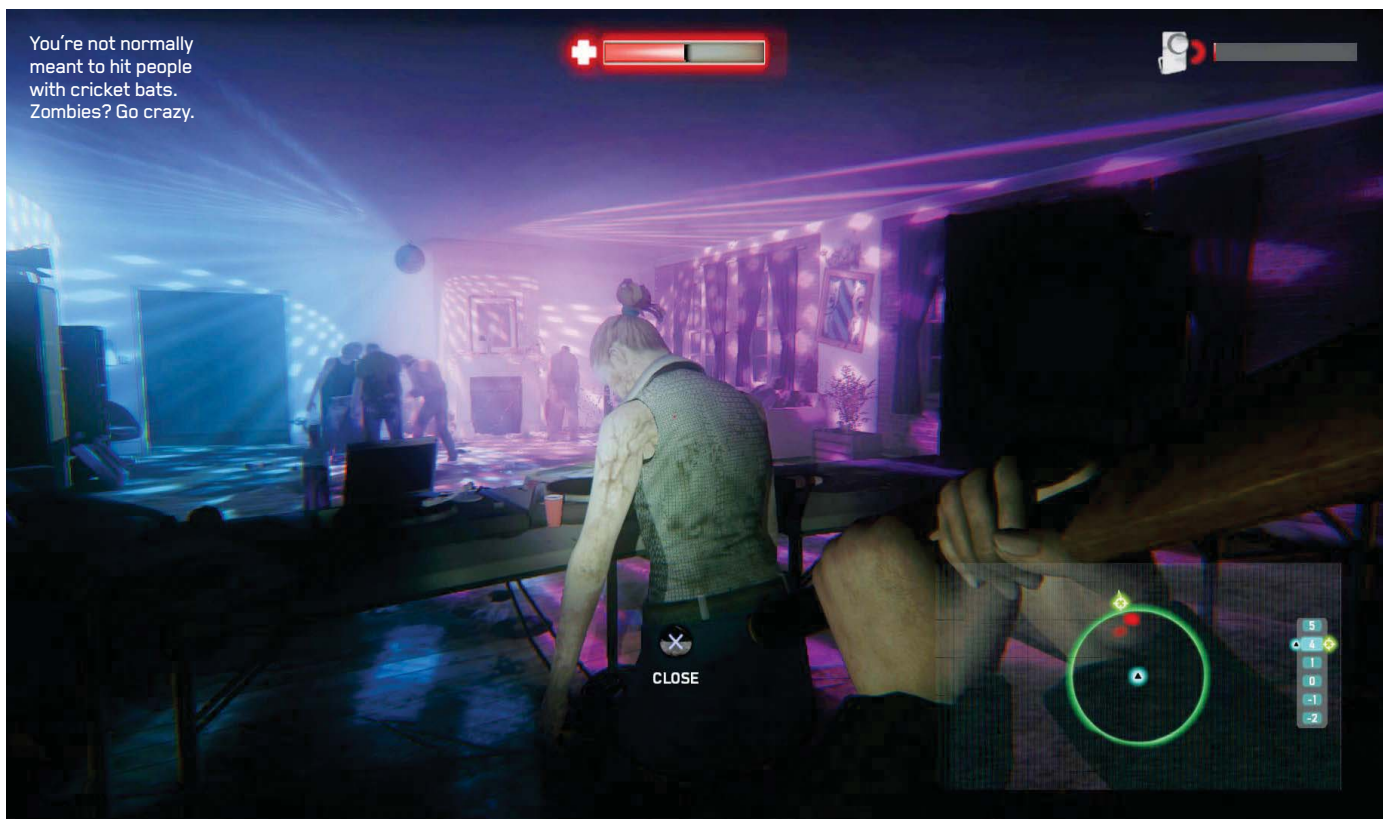
The procedural technology on show would impress more were it not for serious incidents of pretzel limbs, clipping issues and poor ol' BUD frequently corkscrewing his neck 360°. But since he need only function as a cartoon robot, and not an anatomically correct person, these movement mistakes feel more like gags. Yes, it's frustrating when his drunken stumbles send you plummeting, but you can use springy foliage as launch pads and teleporters eliminate the need for extensive backtracking.

Although completable in a single sitting, Grow Home is just as long as it needs to be without overstaying its welcome. Inventive, tense, and sometimes hilariously frustrating, this organic climbing curio feels at home.

VERDICT

A charming, if insubstantial, freeform exploration game that feels refreshingly open thanks to your intuitive climbing skills. It's almost guaranteed to, ahem, grow on you. **Ben Griffin**

"VIEWS ARE GORGEOUS AS SPIRALS OF VINES SWIRL THROUGH THE MILKY SKIES."



You're not normally meant to hit people with cricket bats. Zombies? Go crazy.

LONDON'S MAULING

@GameGriffin

ZOMBI

Ubisoft drops the U and gives us the Z



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB UBISOFT
DEV UBISOFT
MONTPELLIER

Somewhere around the time you break a Shoreditch knob's head with a cricket bat, ironically, *Zombi* comes alive. You play as a British civvy who wakes in a London underground station-turned-bunker during a viral outbreak. Bossy survivors want things from your mute protagonist and, well, you've got to keep busy, right?

Ubisoft Montpellier excels at environmental storytelling: the grungy Bakerloo train clearly abandoned in a hurry; a red-suited Queen's Guard prowling Westminster; stumbling across a Tower Hamlets party attended by tracksuited zombies. This London mixes keen-eyed authenticity with broadly drawn comedy.

It's like a cockney *Dark Souls*, broken up by safehouses offering respite from the carnage, and threaded with shortcuts. When you crack a manhole and bridge two areas like the world's most satisfying dot-to-dot, it's a mini victory.

While the voices in your ear who send you on quests to scan CCTV cameras, find cures and establish comms make *Zombi* a game so rigidly linear as to approach rigor mortis, emergent scares find wiggle room – like the mad moment

in Buckingham Palace when a horde backs me into a room and I frantically board up the door to buy time. As they ram through I pull a flare from my pack and lure them away.

LEICESTER SCARE

Combat feels sub-*Dead-Island* with eggshell zombie noggins splitting identically, and a lack of locational damage means it's just a case of holding **L2** to ready your weapon and **R2** to swing. Whack, whack, whack. Although fighting never really develops (measly firearm upgrades aside) the predictability of the attacks does allow you to make informed choices whether, for example, you can take on those three SWAT biters or not.

Though a little stale and artificial, death rarely feels unfair. You're forced into constant vigilance – when rummaging through your inventory you'll need to find a quiet corner because there's no pausing, and knowing the right time to kill your torch or pick a lock is key to survival.

You lose your character and gear upon death, but you can actually kill your zombified previous incarnation and regain everything. It's perma-death with perpetual impetus to pick up where you left off, offering another stab at things in case of sudden death involving, say, exploding gas tank zombies.

On a technical level, sadly, *Zombi* disappoints. Doom-laden prophecies scrawled on walls are slightly more legible than on Wii U, but Ubisoft doesn't take advantage of the PS4's potential for superior visuals or framerates – the only new trick is piping tinny comms through the gamepad's speakers. But while it still looks and runs like an old game, *Zombi* is saved by an evocative world and the innovative features that make it feel newer.

VERDICT

Below-par visuals and production obscure, but don't fully diminish, vibrant design and fresh ideas. Brits rejoice: finally, *28 Days Later* comes to life on PlayStation. **Ben Griffin**

"AT ONE POINT YOU STUMBLE ACROSS A PARTY ATTENDED BY TRACKSUITED ZOMBIES."

Bosses fill the screen and often require the firepower of multiple 'yous'.



SUPER TIME FORCE ULTRA

All the girls say I'm pretty fly for a time guy



You actually save the world in the first five minutes of *Super Time Force Ultra*, the remastered version of Capybara's action-packed, dumb-smart side-scroller that's essentially an excuse to use the acronym STFU. Back on *Super Time Force*'s space-based Superbus, fresh from a round of moon golf with the President, the double-eye-patched Commander Repeatski divulges your next mission: "Make the present world more better-like by screwing around with events in the past and the future."

There are six distinct time periods in which to get your butterfly effect on, from prehistoric romps to sci-fi escapades, and they hinge on two mechanics: you only have a minute to complete each stage, and you can change characters on-the-fly. Death means having to rewind yourself back to life — any time from the instant before your expiration to the very start of the level — and this gives you the ability to fight alongside your previous incarnations. It's a clever feature enabling you to build strategies by coordinating different versions of yourself.

You begin with the ability to switch between machine gunner Jean Rambois, melee-minded



Shieldy Blockerson, and sniper Aimy McKillen. On a hover truck speeding through a Fifth Element-style skyline as law goons attack from both sides, you can 'record' Blockerson smashing foes on the left of the screen, rewind, then use Rambois to blast incomers from the right.

Victory against one early mech boss seems a tall task given you've barely a minute, but get killed a few times and you'll come to your own rescue, pounding him from all sides as a one-man-multi-man army.

TEMPORAL BATTER

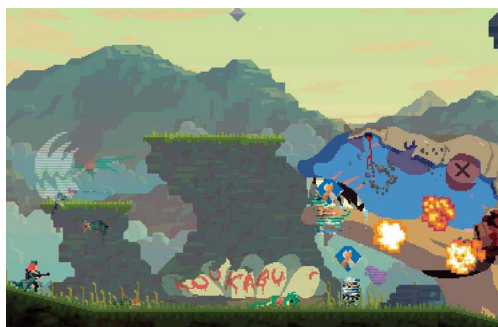
Characters' special attacks vary the action. Try using McKillen's penetrating bullets to thin columns of enemies after setting up a chargeable shield orb with Blockerson. Each squad member represents a specific strategy, and there

are plenty to unlock. Cameos from *The Order*'s Sir Galahad, *Journey*'s scarf guy, and even president of Sony's Worldwide Studio, Shuhei Yoshida, are exclusive to STFU on PS4.

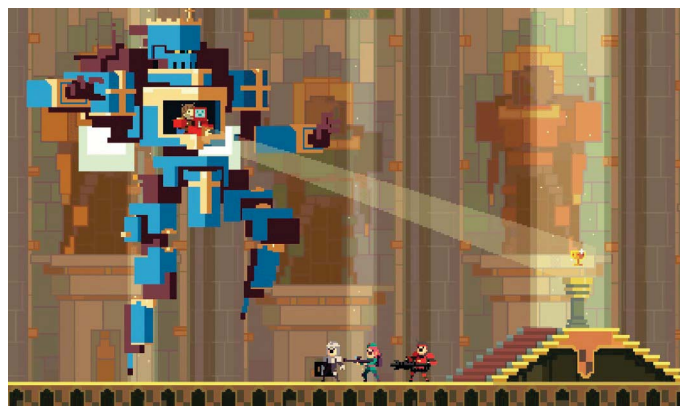
Control issues hamper the action, however. Although you can shoot in eight directions, this is only possible while moving. When the 'aim' button is also the 'run' button, targeting an enemy's weak point becomes an exercise in frustration as the window in which you actually hit them is painfully brief.

Busy visuals compound the issue. Although items that extend time, slow it down and award extra rewinds add depth, the pixel art screens become perilously busy as a result, the action increasingly hard to keep up with as collectibles pop and explosions obscure and upwards of 20 characters

Right Yes, that is a giant dino head with cannons strapped to it.



Below Dr Infinity's mech corresponds to the era it's in. Here it's decked out like a knight.



Above The polite SWAZ police force is your main nemesis in the 3072 levels.

fill the screen. Still, it gives a nice sense of relentlessly accelerating chaos.

This obviously results in a lot of death, but that's less frustrating here as the more it happens the more characters help you and the easier the game gets. But it's not completely out of the question for skilled players to beat stages first time either. Like a unicyclist, time control is undoubtedly quirky yet inherently well balanced.

QUARK AT THE MOON

STFU isn't just smart in its temporal tampering – its writing is deadly clever. Take the mission briefings: in 1,000,000 BC you must stop an asteroid strike to create an integrated human-dino society in which triceratops play basketball; in 673 you'll swipe the Holy Grail to flog online and use the money to save STFU's favourite present-day restaurant, Medieval Funtimes.

From Commander Repeatski's boss fight advice ("It helps to just picture them in their underwear") to your clumsy entrance into each era as you crash land on top of some unlucky native dinosaur/knight/mermaid, barely ten seconds pass without a gag.

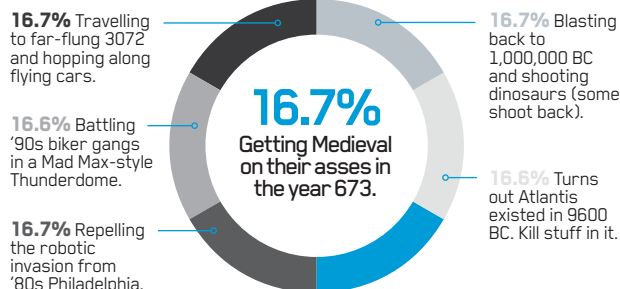
That's STFU all over. It looks dumb, but when you jack into a garish late '90s version of the internet on the hunt for plugins so you can view LOLZ cat pictures, then team up with 20 versions of your past self to battle demonic tots over at a website called Baby Zone before fighting an ASCII skull spewing glitches at you, you bear witness to its crazy genius.

VERDICT

STFU is *Contra* remade by a team of mad scientists who watch *Adventure Time* on an endless loop. Only minor control issues hamper this deceptively clever and immensely entertaining game. **Ben Griffin**

THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... SUPER TIME FORCE ULTRA



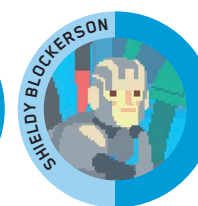
FRIENDS & ENEMIES



Medal-loving leader of the titular STF. He knows the art of fight-jitsu.



Former Foreign Legionnaire with a taste for bullet hell.



Proves offence is the best defence by bashing goons with his shield.

STAT PACK

20

The number of enemies cut, which includes werewolf mermaids and ninja priests.

2

The number of butt crack pixels that earned STFU a Teen rating. You naughty, naughty pixels.

100

Oysters Capy creative director Kris Piotrowski allegedly ate after a successful PAX.

£0

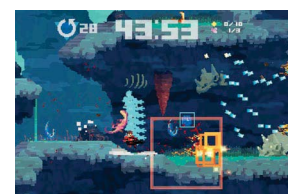
The cost of STFU for PS+ members. Yes, all those time travelling levels for free. Bargain.

LOVING/HATING



JETPACK JOYRIDE

From dogfighting cherubs to dodging meteors during a prehistoric stampede, jetpack sections are furious and fast.



PICK-ME-UP

Multiple different pick-ups and their screen-obscuring effects can make keeping up with the game difficult. Where even are we?

TROPHY CABINET



BRONZE

Team up the character from Journey... with the character from Journey. It's a Journey party for everyone!



SILVER

Complete a 'clean' run using the very dirty Squirty Harry and you'll bag yourself this pungent silver.



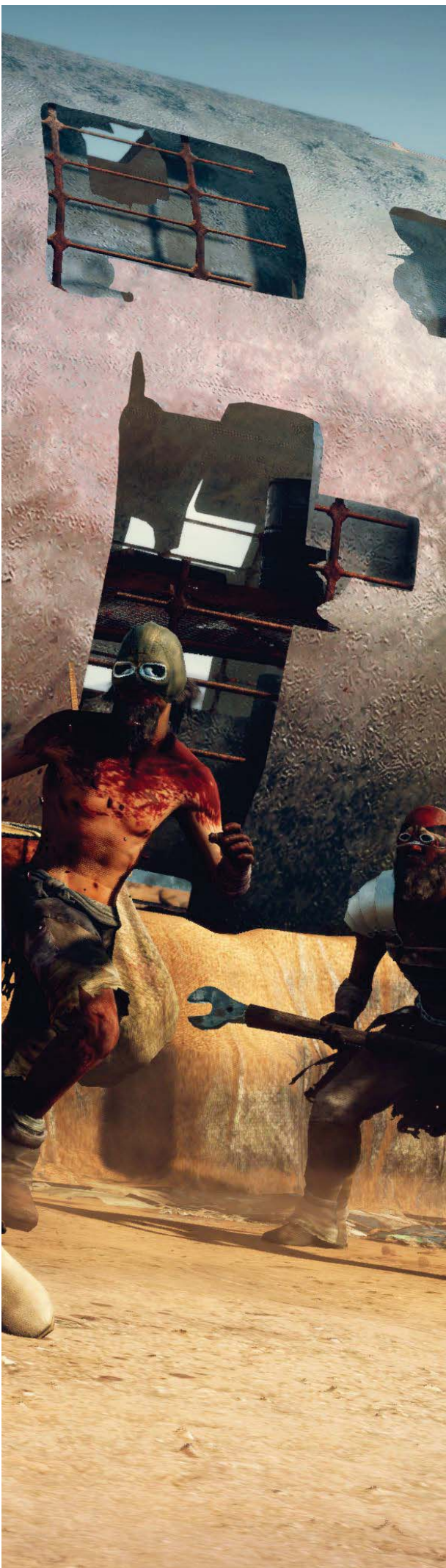
GOLD

Shatter or collect all the shards in the game for the 'OMG You Sharded!' trophy. We're sensing a toilet theme here.

Hand-to-hand combat is Arkham-esque, but it lacks the nuance and depth of Bats' fisticuffs.



"SOME OF THE SANDBOX CHAOS OF JUST CAUSE HAS FOUND ITS WAY INTO THE WASTELAND."



"REVIEW ME!"

@tomdavidssykes

MAD MAX

Furious or not, Avalanche's latest is running on fumes



INFO
 FORMAT PS4
 ETA OUT NOW
 PUB WARNER BROS
 DEV AVALANCHE
 STUDIOS

Fittingly for a game set after the end of civilisation, Mad Max takes place in one of the leanest open-worlds I've ever explored. There's not an inch of fat to either its story or its environment, which you'll need to scavenge ruthlessly at every turn. Sure, its striking and varied desert has a slate of objective markers leading the way to secondary activities, but these are pretty much essential if you want Max to fulfil his modest goals, one of which is simply to remain alive.

His other goal, quickly established via a pleasingly brisk prologue sequence, is to build the perfect car. (Or the perfect car for killing, ramming and harpooning stuff, anyway.) After losing his beloved Interceptor – and after introducing a chainsaw to the head of local warlord Scabrous Scrotus – Max awakens in the desert, parched and bruised.

Fortuitously, he stumbles across a wrench-monkey named Chumbucket, who offers to build him his 'Magnum Opus': a ramshackle vehicle you'll evolve with junk found throughout the game. Scrap is the currency of this wasteland, and you'll use it to buy and upgrade car parts and, for some reason, to purchase clobber and hairstyles for Max himself. Because beards need scrap, too.

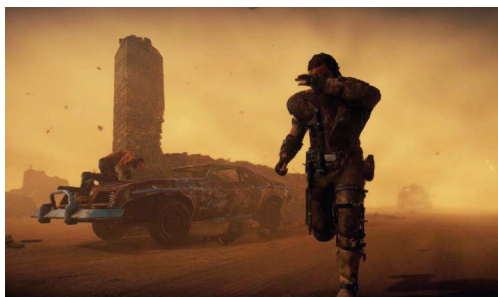
DEMOLITION DERBY

Scrap is everywhere; in wrecks and abandoned buildings, in the pockets of bandits and piled up in tidy heaps in enemy camps. However, the portions are usually tiny, and you'll need to gather every last inch to be able to afford necessary upgrades. Occasionally these are vital to advance the story, but mostly they're needed to advance your life, which is ever at the mercy of roaming convoys and outpost defences.

Unlike, say, Assassin's Creed Unity's sprawling web of extraneous busywork, Mad Max's various side-missions are an integral part of the game due to how stingily it doles out its currency. This isn't a complaint – it's a sign of good design. »



Right Sandstorms appear at random, blanketing your surroundings in a fog of dust and debris.



Left Wanderers offer quests, share intel on enemy camps, or will beg you for water.

» How many times have we completed a game's side-quests, only to find ourselves overpowered or over-levelled for the story missions?

That story, such as it is, has you performing tasks for a bunch of stronghold-owning bigwigs, each with a territory under attack from the aforementioned Scabrous Scrotus or from one of the other gangs squabbling over the wasteland. You'll demolish totem poles, claim enemy bases and eliminate convoys, with nearly every action reducing Scrotus' influence over each area.

Max's reasons for helping these people are not particularly well-explained, but boil down to him either seeking bespoke car parts, or hoping to open pathways to restricted territories. There's something admirably pure about Mad Max's grounded, straightforward story, but I could have done with a compelling reason to persist, or even characters to care about throughout the otherwise sparse dust-caked journey.

Max Rockatansky, as he is in the films, is little more than a glum man who drives well, so it falls to his omnipresent mate and general lunatic

Chumbucket to carry the story. Luckily, your disfigured mechanic sidekick is a constant delight. Riding in the back of the Magnum Opus at all times, Chum earns his keep by drawing attention to things in the environment, making funny remarks to and about his reticent driver, and fixing up their trusty car after it's been bashed about.

CHUM'S PEDIGREE

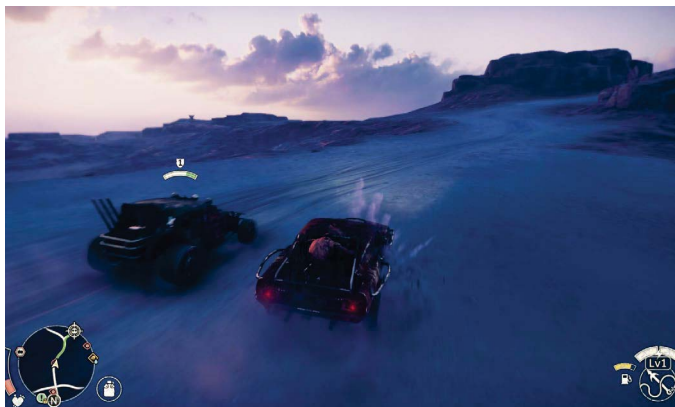
In a game where you need to frequently find water or food to replenish your health, it's perhaps a little odd that Chumbucket can repair a flaming vehicle to a fully working state in around a minute, with no penalty save the car having to remain stationary while he does so. Yet it encourages you to have fun with the Magnum Opus, sailing off ramps/over the sides of cliffs or ramming the living hell out of that honking road warrior coming your way.

Car combat, as you'd hope, is weighty and impactful, and on a basic level it feels great to bash into the side of a vehicle, to grapple anything and everything with the harpoon attachment, and to blow War Boys to smithereens with the Thunderpoon gun. Some of the sandbox chaos of Just Cause has found its way into the game, which incidentally features some of the most satisfying explosions around.

Mad Max's pseudo-sandbox nature is at its best when a sandstorm suddenly appears, reduces visibility to just a few metres and pelts man and vehicle alike with scattered debris. Ignore the notice to take shelter in a nearby stronghold, and you can attempt to salvage flying 'Muthaloot' boxes that reward you with a sizeable chunk of precious scrap metal.

These storms hint at a reactive playground that never quite materialises, even if there's fun to be had with

"THESE SANDSTORMS HINT AT A REACTIVE PLAYGROUND THAT NEVER MATERIALISES."

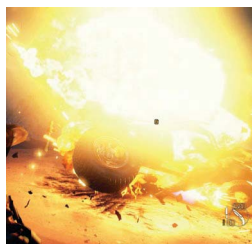


Above Mad Max has some of our favourite skyboxes in all of gaming. So pretty.

Right Camps have explosive 'thundersticks' that Max will happily wedge into a foe's gut.



Above Your shotty can also be used while driving to explode gas tanks.



the game's constituent parts. The hand-to-hand combat has basically been lifted from Arkham Asylum, and because it's been lifted from AA, it's meaty (if a bit simplistic).

STORM IN A TEACUP

Camp infiltrations play out like Far Cry 3's outpost liberations, though with less scope for creativity in your approach. Mad Max's most original elements are its convoy missions, which require you to take down packs of armoured cars. These quests make the most of the game's driving focus and mostly empty desert environment, even if you are essentially going around in a big circle the entire time.

Sadly the appeal of these activities fade the more you play, as what surprises there are soon dry up. You're a man doing a job in a workmanlike fashion, and true to that, the various tasks, challenges, races and scavenger hunts become

a chore after a while. There's a lot here — a lot of scrap to collect and cars to push off the side of the road — but nothing really gluing it all together. No sense of purpose beyond Max gradually cobbling together a nicer car than the one he had.

There's a vital, and annoyingly unquantifiable missing ingredient. Something such as Shadow Of Mordor's Nemesis mechanics might have brought the various systems together, transforming a mostly static wasteland into one with dynamism and life, where it feels like you are really making a difference. As it is, Mad Max is a mostly dry game about a man and his car. It's great for what it is — but that's all it is.

VERDICT

Chunky car and melee combat, an often visually stunning wasteland, and a funny sidekick make this a solid open-world, albeit one that runs out of gas mid-journey. **Tom Sykes**

THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... MAD MAX

14% Tilting the camera upwards to look at the stunning skies.

10% Pelting the car off cliffs to hear Chumbucket groan about the damage caused.

1% Using scrap metal to give Max a bushier beard.

65% Wishing you had enough scrap to upgrade everything you want on your car.

8% Going up in a big balloon to survey the surrounding area for clues.

2% Eating maggots from a wriggling corpse to restore your health. Yum!

STAT PACK

25

Years since the last Mad Max game (a top-down NES drive-'em-up based on MM2).

4

(Mostly) friendly local warlords for whom you'll need to complete missions across the wasteland.

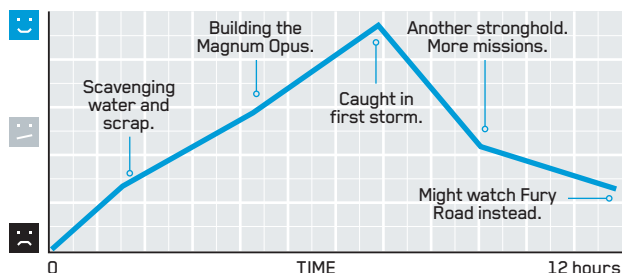
18

Different territories in the desert, many with their own distinct look and atmosphere.

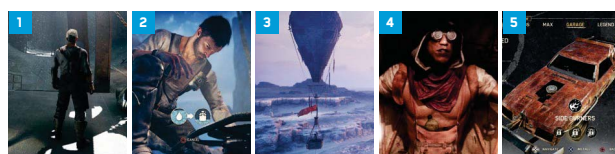
10k

Scrap you'll need to gather to complete the Metal Detector challenge. Yep, that's a lot.

COMPEL-O-GRAPH



THE FIRST FIVE HOURS...



1 Max teams up with Chumbucket to build a new motor. **2** Turns out people need water. Along with food, it's the only way to restore Max's health. **3** Balloons are this game's equivalent of Ubisoft towers. Time to ride one and use Max's binoculars to mark missions on the map. **4** Meet this weird guy in the desert who increases Max's stats. **5** The story won't advance until you spend scrap to upgrade the Opus.

TROPHY CABINET



BRONZE

At a certain point you can return to a previous area to rescue a dog and collect a bronze trophy.

SILVER

Beat a Death Run race in a 'legendary' time, with every unlockable Archangel car. So no pressure then.

GOLD

Max's 'Legend' rank reflects how many challenges he's beaten. Do everything it asks of you and strike gold.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ALSO ON PS3 ETA OUT NOW
PUB EA DEV EA TIBURON



MADDEN NFL 16

Intend it like Beckham

O dell Beckham Jr's highlight reel one-handed catch for the New York Giants last November reminded us that while it's the quarterbacks who take home the plaudits, it takes two to nail that perfect touchdown pass. This is reflected here with a renovated catching engine that makes each passing play different to the last.

Not that the quarterbacks don't earn their money. Thanks to a new array of passing options, there's more to contemplate on the snap than ever before – and little time to contemplate it. Once you've singled out a receiver, do you throw it low by holding down **L2**, or high with **L1**? The former makes life difficult for the receiver, but cuts the risk of costly interceptions. Ideally you'll spy a receiver timing their run to perfection and feather a pass over their head by double tapping their icon.

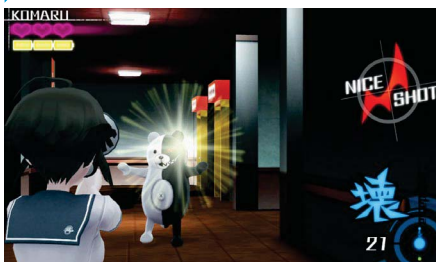
But unlike previous entries in the series, once the QB releases the ball, fate still remains very much in your grasp. With control reverting to the wide receiver, players have to decide what type of catch to attempt ¹ – an 'aggressive' grab has a high margin of success if your WR is beefy enough, but Beckham-style showier types of catching can grant you an extra step or two, leaving you better placed to continue your run to the end zone.

In truth, Madden 16 often gives you a little *too* much to think about – and the punishing number of interceptions you'll concede while experimenting may see you scurry back to your favourite playbooks. ² But tough it out and a rewarding entry in the series that updates a long-neglected part of America's favourite sport will land squarely in your open arms. **Paul Randall**



FOOTNOTES ¹ The game prompts suggestions while the ball is in the air, which can throw you off at times. ² It's worth putting in the graft in the tutorials – high-level AI teams will destroy you if not.

INFO FORMAT PS VITA ETA OUT NOW
PUB NIS AMERICA DEV SPIKE CHUNSOFT



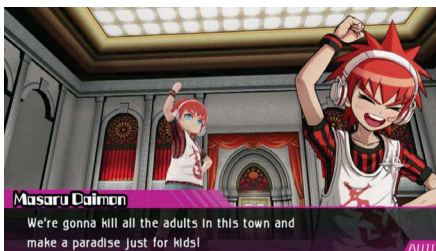
DANGANRONPA ANOTHER EP: ULTRA DESPAIR GIRLS

In contempt of court

Here, in the newest entry of the cult student murder sim, the first victim to go is good sense as Spike Chunsoft swaps text-driven courtroom puzzling for a third-person survival horror. There are neat ideas at work, such as tiny weak points that channel Killer 7's panicked aiming, and colourful ammo types that send enemies into dancing spasms or crush them under electrified machinery, but the whole thing is let down by stiff aiming, limp feedback and zero eye for action pacing.

It's most successful when gunplay becomes something of a riddle, with puzzle chambers that challenge you to use those ammo gimmicks to off crowds of enemies with a single shot. This at least taps into the logic that the series has championed up until now. The inclusion of actual riddles, solved using a bullet that acts like Batman's Arkham-esque Detective Vision, further hints at a developer desperately attempting to tap into its roots in a new genre that defies the studio at every single step.

Worse, when the game does slip into heavy narrative – which is infuriatingly often, creating a horrible stop/start pace – the story is a mess. The idea of a city being purged of adults by psychotic children ¹ is a razor-sharp hook, blunted by a misjudged tone that sits themes of child abuse alongside poop gags and the series' notoriously lecherous approach to the ladies. ² Danganronpa has always danced around the line that separates good and bad taste, but this often verges on the ugly. It will take a considerable rethink to win me back over. **Paul Randall**



FOOTNOTES ¹ The kids' profiles of adult 'demons' are a smart send-up of Monster Hunter's very own bestiary. ² One boss fight involves snipping away a young girl's clothes. Bleurgh.

INFO FORMAT PS4 (DOWNLOAD ONLY) ETA OUT NOW
PUB EUROVIDEO MEDIEN DEV BLACK FOREST GAMES



GIANA SISTERS: DREAM RUNNERS

Something to jog your memory

Since the Giana Sisters brand is about on par with Alfred Chicken and Boogerman at this point, sticking the failed '80s platformer siblings in a side-scrolling multiplayer racer immediately gets Dream Runners off to a stumbling start.

The aim here is to create enough distance from your competitors that the edge of the screen swallows them, which is a simple premise, but one Black Forest overcomplicates. All nine stages are far too cramped and zoomed-in: tear across snowy mountains, ancient ruins and dark caves and you'll frequently hurtle into the twisters, buzzsaws and spiky blue sea urchin *things* that all lurk just outside your view. ¹

Charging through dreamgates enables you to instantly change day to night, raise water levels and produce springs from the ground, but since effects are often negligible they're more fetching distractions than reliable weapons. Speaking of which, a confusing overabundance of pick-ups results in you blindly firing whatever you get. Sometimes it works (when you drop a trail of pink owls to slow tailgaters) and sometimes it doesn't (when you blast forward in a fireball and bounce back off a wall like a shortsighted Human Torch).

Collecting crystals for a speed boost adds a degree of tactics, and a countdown stops races overrunning, but there are still fundamental faults. The AI ² sometimes beats you before you're even off the screen, and you can actually lose by getting too far ahead. While playing in four-player splitscreen or online produces fairer results, there's a time and pace for everything, and this isn't it. **Ben Griffin**



FOOTNOTES ¹ You can duck or jump over hazards, but you're rarely given enough time to. ² There are five weirdly random characters to choose from: owl, ninja, robot, knight and girl.



TOUR DE FORCE

@tomdavidsykes



DISNEY INFINITY 3.0

Has the Force awoken this adolescent toys-to-life series?



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ALSO ON PS3
ETA OUT NOW
PUB DISNEY
INTERACTIVE
DEV AVALANCHE
SOFTWARE

Disney's acquisition of Star Wars is beginning to bear fruit. There's apparently some sort of film coming out, but more importantly the likes of Luke, Chewie and everyone's favourite character Zeb Orrelios have been added to Disney Infinity's bulging toyset. This year's Starter Pack offers an Infinity base, the Twilight Of The Empire campaign, and figures of Clone Wars heroes Ahsoka Tano and Anakin Skywalker, though if you already have the base from previous iterations you can buy the disc and the Play Set as standalone items.

As ever, you slot the figures and a Play Set model onto the base to begin an adventure. Twilight Of The Empire is set after Episode II, and comprises a few hours of story missions set on Coruscant, Tatooine and so on. If you've played the previous games, it'll all be very familiar: you fight, you platform and you collect Jabba The Hutt's weight in glowing orbs. The punchy brawling feels slick and even a little tactical towards the end of Twilight, making good use of Jedi powers to enable you to disrupt shields, push droids off cliffs, and execute swish lightsaber combos.

"THE BRAWLING FEELS SLICK AND EVEN A LITTLE TACTICAL AS YOU PROGRESS."

You'll visit four planets in total, each containing a hoard of side-quests, challenge missions and collectibles in addition to the main story beats. Some are fun, some are tiresome, and all reward with a lovely chunk of experience.

Exhaust a world and you can also head to the stars, flying around in little space sections that have you defending ships from attacks and dogfighting with the best of them.

THREE AND OUT

Twilight might be short, but for the most part it's hugely polished, with a wealth of side content to explore alone or with a friend. None of it is revelatory – this is standard Infinity fare – but the new setting and characters go some way to disguising that.

There are few surprises in the returning Toy Box hub either, which is once again a huge environment offering tutorials and challenges themed around platforming, driving, fighting and even a spot of interior design. You can build

and decorate your personal domicile with unlocked toy parts, providing you've either bought them (with in-game cash), received them as rewards or found them during missions.

These parts can also be used to make your own Toy Boxes: separate, blank-slate worlds that you can customise, fill with basically anything and share online. 3.0 comes with a new selection of parts in the traditional Toy Shop, and whether you can be bothered to make use of it all again will really depend on your drive. There's a hell of a lot of stuff to do here, but by and large it's the same stuff you did in 2.0.

New players and Star Wars nuts will likely get the most out of this – returning Infinity fans may find themselves just going through the motions.

VERDICT

Three games in, this feels like Disney Infinity 1.5, with little advancement save the ever-expanding cast list. But Star Wars is a huge draw that's hard to overlook... **Tom Sykes**

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB BOSSA STUDIOS DEV BOSSA STUDIOS



I AM BREAD

Get to the toaster!

Anyone undiscerning enough to have watched Transformers may have developed an irrational fear of their toaster.¹ The good news: I Am Bread ditched the four-slice in favour of hair-dryers, lawnmowers, and other DIY griddles. The bad news: this toast simulation puzzler features the walking bread.

I Am Bread's show-stopper is Story Mode, in which you control a slice of wholemeal determined to fulfil its toasty destiny and obtain that coveted beach-bready glow. Manoeuvring the slice is like driving a car for the first time – the controls feel awkward as you attempt to flop it this way and that by utilising its opposable crusts, all the while glancing at the grip-o-meter to ensure it doesn't peel off a wall mid-climb.

Level locations span from a kitchen to a poorly attended petrol station, while obstacles include rubber ducks and oh-so-slippery butter-pats, but frankly they're the yeast of your worries compared to the flour – ahem, floor. My tip: treat it as lava, because it will eat through your slice's edibility meter in seconds and force a restart.²

Getting from A to BBQ while reading notes about the tragicomic consequences of your slice's actions turns out to be pretty fun, but it's not the most fun available as five additional modes let you revisit levels to race bagels, float around in zero gravity, and smash bottles with a baguette.

The full game nutrition tab is 60% funny physics jam, 30% carb chaos, and 10% Night of the Living Bread. If you're willing to rise to the challenge and master its crumbly controls, there's just about enough novelty to make it worth your while despite its limited shelf life. **Jenny Baker**



FOOTNOTES 1 For those not in the know, a fear that it will spring to life and toast the earth. 2 Fail multiple times and you gain a power-up that grants unlimited edibility so no level is unbeatable.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ALSO ON PS3 ETA OUT NOW
PUB TELLTALE GAMES DEV TELLTALE GAMES



TALES FROM THE BORDERLANDS: SIE4 - ESCAPE PLAN BRAVO

Hitch a ride... to greatness!

Tales from the Borderlands has been delivering an energetic experience so far, and while Escape Plan Bravo takes a slightly different approach, it's still one of the most enjoyable slices of episodic gaming Telltale Games has ever delivered.

This time your charismatic two-sides-of-the-same-coin protagonists have to lead their motley crew of lovable misfits up to the corporate space station Helios, with the aim of finding the final piece of the puzzle – puzzle here to be read as 'robot programmed to find a missing Vault full of treasure'. The mission goes, predictably, awry, and while it's not quite an emotional rollercoaster there are points where your feelings are contemplating some of the bigger rides at Alton Towers.

Despite this, Episode 4 is light on heavy decisions. There's a lack of gravity, and not just in the bits where your character is floating in space:¹ a feeling that any decisions you make won't substantially affect the final chapter. It's unusual to have not even one game changer to mull over, and Escape Plan Bravo is the worse for it.

Instead, kick back and enjoy a delicious burrito of a game filled with adorable robots, slow-motion space walks, and a gunfight unlike any you'll have ever seen. It's a title guaranteed to make you laugh out loud at least once, or this reviewer will give you your money back.²

Will it change gaming? No. Is it almost perfect in and of itself? You bet Butt Stallion's shiny behind it is. **Alice Bell**



FOOTNOTES 1 Although it's worth noting that the floaty space bits are especially lovely to look at. 2 Please note: this does not constitute a legal contract, but you'll still definitely enjoy this game.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB UBISOFT DEV SIGNAL STUDIOS



TOY SOLDIERS: WAR CHEST

Toy Story meets Platoon

War Chest is the third in Signal's cute toy-themed war series, and the first to arrive on PlayStation. It wouldn't have been unreasonable to expect something special for the occasion: a noticeable visual upgrade, perhaps, or a theme tying everything together. Instead, after the WWI, then Cold War premise of the originals,¹ we get a bland mish-mash of figures drawn from a plethora of worlds.

There's another WWI army and sci-fi/fantasy troops included in the base package. Stump up for the DLC² and you'll also get units from He-Man, G.I. Joe and Assassin's Creed (The best ones, in other words – stingy!). Whichever army you choose, your job is to defend your base – sorry, toy box – in a very tower defence sort of way.

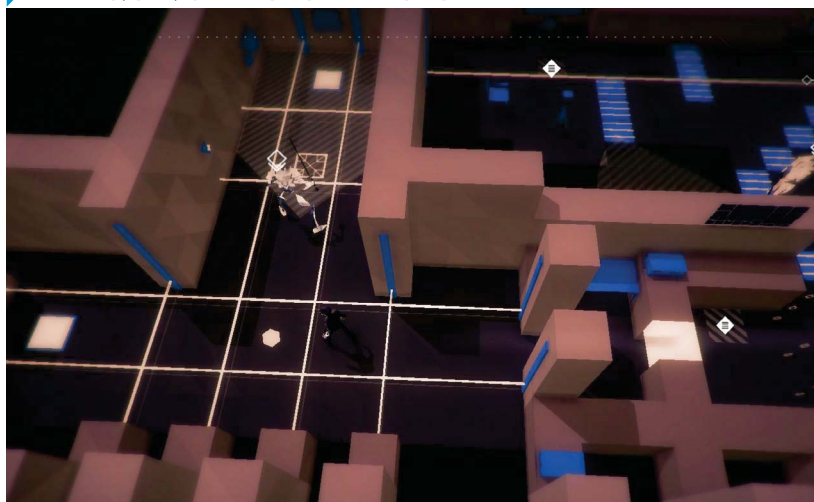
You know the drill: you plunk towers down in preset locations, then you keep everything crossed that your soldiers can take out the opposing forces before they breach your home. Where Toy Soldiers differs is that it wants you to get involved, either by assuming command of the towers yourself, or by temporarily controlling roving heroes that deal a ton of damage. Multiple games in, this hands-on approach is still enjoyably tactile, and there is a certain thrill to the act of gunning down a horde of Care Bears as Kaiser Wilhelm.

Gimmicks aside, however, this is fairly rote and restrictive by modern tower defence standards. Defense Grid 2 gives you many more options during missions, while the upcoming Dungeon Defenders 2 is more hands-on. The genre's evolved a fair bit recently, then, and Toy Soldiers is beginning to feel like an antique. **Tom Sykes**



FOOTNOTES 1 The games capture the feeling of playing with those green plastic army men remarkably well. 2 Or you can also buy a much more expensive Hall Of Fame Edition that includes the DLC.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ALSO ON PS VITA ETA OUT NOW (PS4), TBC (PS VITA) PUB BITHELL GAMES DEV BITHELL GAMES



TURN IT DOWN

@tomdavidssykes

VOLUME

Rob was alone. Well, apart from all those guards

Despite appearances, *Volume* isn't a game about sneaking into buildings and, as hero Rob puts it, "taking all the things." It's a game of simulated stealth-puzzling set in a single room, which holodecks a series of virtual places around you. You're Rob Locksley, an affable near-future version of Nottingham's favourite hoodie, streaming your exploits to your loyal band of followers, or 'merry men'.

The premise may be a bit overdeveloped, but essentially it's like Neil Buchanan's *Finders Keepers*: you nick (fake) stuff in the hundred-odd simulations that comprise the story, while a watching audience wills you on. Unlike the kids' show, that data then inspires thousands to also rob from the rich. As your AI chum Alan (Danny Wallace) informs you throughout the game, you're reclaiming Britain from the rotten Gisborne company in the process.

But with little to no sense of progression to any of the stages themselves, *Volume* feels like one giant tutorial, introducing new items and features at a steady rate before supplying a few levels apiece that use them. While this does keep you on your toes, the game never quite coalesces into a form you can get to grips with in a satisfying way. You can almost feel the

development time grow as another gadget is chucked in, and then another, and another.

QUIET RIOT

The basic sneaking is pretty solid, relying on dim-witted AI soldiers sporting stylish vision cones. Break line of sight and an AI will generally forget you were ever on the planet — easy to exploit, yes, but we're talking about an MGS 1 homage, here.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing you can simply run past enemies to checkpoints, then restart with no penalty. Thankfully this horrible exploit has been patched on PC and the PS4 fix is on its way. When it arrives *Volume*'s end-of-stage grading systems will finally make more sense.

There is an interesting and detailed mythology behind *Volume*, using Britain's folklore gold, but the core stealth-puzzling just isn't tight enough to support the features that are soon dogpiled upon it. The community might do better, thanks to the robust level editor, but despite a few standout puzzles there's not quite as much worth shouting about as we'd hoped.

VERDICT

Mike Bithell's long-awaited *Thomas Was Alone* follow-up is a bigger, fancier puzzle game, but one in which the levels don't quite come together as much as the Robin Hood plot. **Tom Sykes**



Below Gadgets such as this visor don't carry over from one stage to the next. You'll need to track them down.



DAVE'S MEIKLE-HAMMERING



It's time to get real about endings. And no, I'm not talking about game endings, which involve you pointing a rocket launcher at a throbbing **SCROTAL SAC** and pulling the trigger. I'm talking about the end of series such as *Uncharted* and *Metal Gear Solid*, which none of you lot are ever happy to **LEAVE THE HELL ALONE**. Do you really want Nathan Drake to be doddering up cliffs in his early sixties, or Konami to ruin MGS the way it **SHAT ALL OVER** *Silent Hill*?



I'll answer that for you: no you bloody don't. Endings bring a sense of closure and

meaning to a series; they make the characters seem like real people and stop the games we love from feeling like **STALE, CYNICAL CASH-INS**. If nothing ever ends, it gets like *The Simpsons*, which has now had more naff episodes than good ones. Sure, you love *Metal Gear Solid* now, but will you love it in five years when a Kojima-less Konami reboots it as a cinematic shooter, with **ONE OF THE SCREECHING JONAS BROTHERS** as the voice of *Idol Snake*?

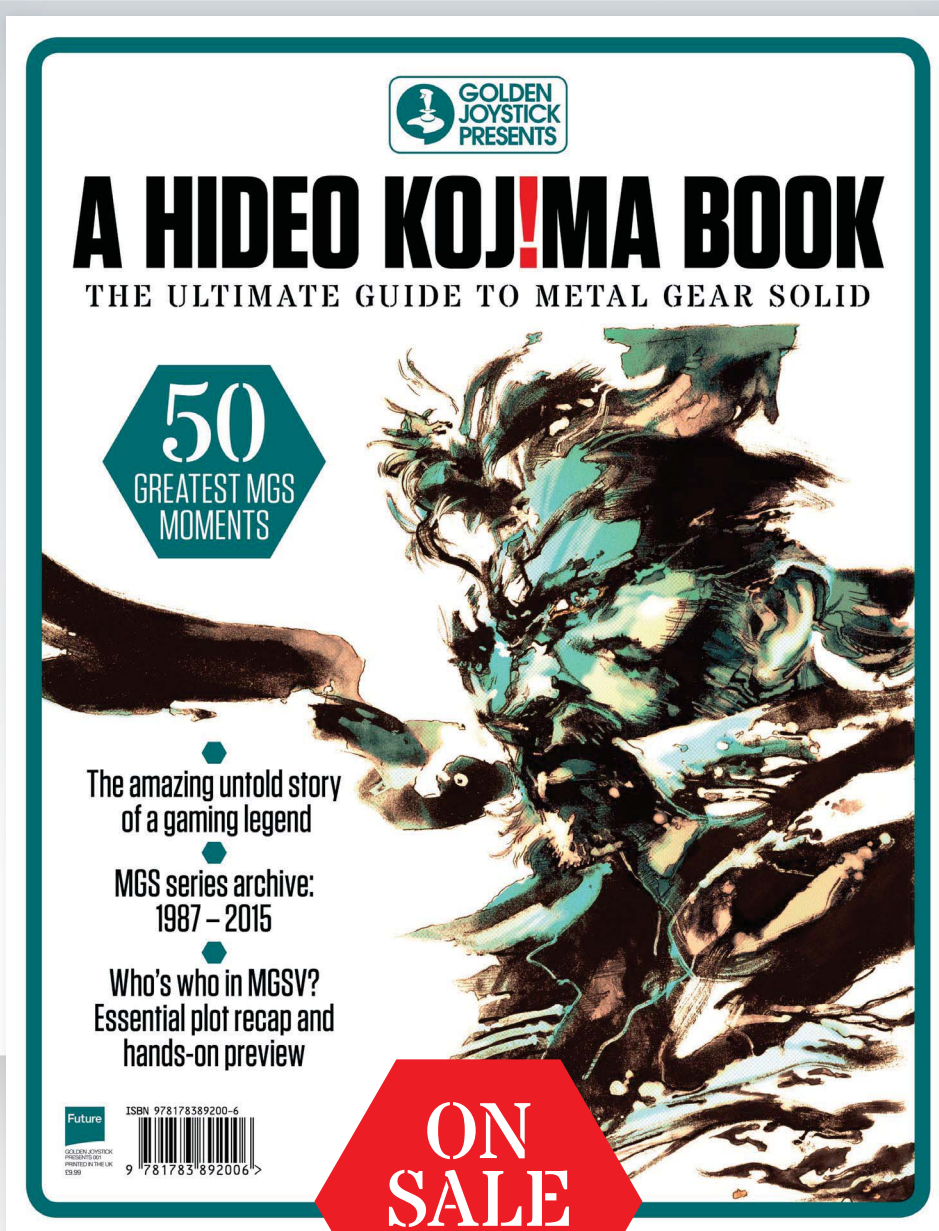


Just look at how **GLISTENINGLY WET WITH EXCITEMENT**

developers get when they're allowed to work on something new. *Horizon* wouldn't exist if Guerrilla was forced to crank out *Killzones* forever, and *Tearaway* would have stayed on paper if Media Molecule had to **SHUNT SACKBOYS DOWN AN ASSEMBLY LINE** for all-time.

Endings are good things. They lead to fresh beginnings. And so I'm taking my own advice and **QUITTING THIS COLUMN IN ITS PRIME**. Like *Fawlty Towers* did, and *Futurama* should have done before they sodding ruined it with masturbatory reboots, I'll be leaving my audience wanting more Meiksy perfection. Don't cry **FAT BABY TEARS** because I'm going back to yelling at TV manufacturers and mailing excrement to Ubisoft. What's that? You're welling up? **GET OVER IT!**

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO METAL GEAR SOLID



Available in print, on iPad and iPhone now



Available on the
App Store

Available from: myfavm.ag/GJ PresentsMGS



network

online dlc movies music how to trophies

this month



on the store

114 Dying Light - The Following
Swap buildings and parkour for open fields and dune buggies in a new slice of undead gaming nirvana courtesy of Dying Light's expansion.



on your xmb

116 Avengers: Age Of Ultron
Joss Whedon's second superhero squad soiree invites Scarlet Witch, Quicksilver and Vision to the party.



music

117 This month's hottest tunes

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118 Stream games to your PS4

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119 Until Dawn



online tests

Journey

112

Discover how one of PlayStation's greatest adventures grows even more memorable online...

online tests

MULTIPLAYER MODES PUT THROUGH THEIR PACES
BY OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING NOW



DESTINY

Matthew Pellett gives up on becoming legend – and almost gives up on the game itself

Regular readers will know I adore Destiny, and while we weren't able to review The Taken King this issue I've finished the campaign and can safely say that the expansion is exceptional. But I've a bone to pick with a certain Skolas from House Of Wolves. I spend five-and-a-half hours on one level 35 Prison Of Elders run (my Hunter's level 33), and as the sixth hour approaches I admit defeat and switch it off. Drops? Glimmer? Nothing – just a quarter of the day down the drain and nothing to show for it. Disc Frisbee, anyone?



THE LAST OF US

Iain Wilson discovers that the Naughty Dog apocalypse is still as brutal as ever

It can take a while to find a match in TLOU's online mode that isn't full of spawn campers armed with frustratingly overpowered automatic rifles and stubby shotguns, but it's definitely worth persevering until the right lobby comes along. You still can't beat the feeling of satisfaction when teaming up with a group of friends and using stealthy tactics to methodically take down your opponents before they see you sneaking up to shank them.

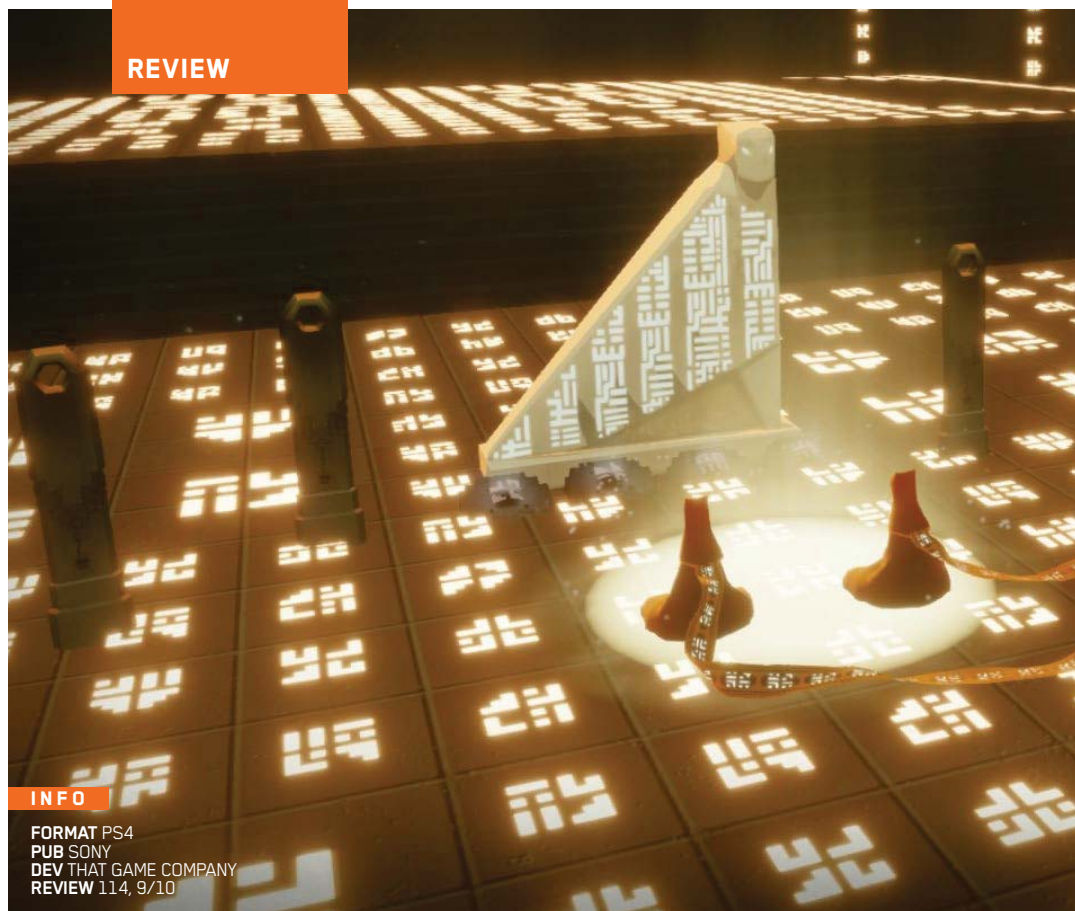


ROCKET LEAGUE

Dom Reseigh-Lincoln puts on his game face and gets it slapped off

Ahhh, that intoxicating mixture of speed and blind luck/skill is a recipe for life-consuming disaster. In the safe confines of RL's offline Exhibition mode I'm a four-wheeled Giroud, bossing my AI foes with silky skills. But as I swagger into the fighting pits of its online sphere, I get a rude awakening. Here, players have *actual* skills, crafting goals from the right combo of speed, direction and boost. My own tactics (drive at the ball really fast, boost, miss it entirely, swear and chase after it again) leave me firmly in loserville.

REVIEW



INFO

FORMAT PS4
PUB SONY
DEV THAT GAME COMPANY
REVIEW 114, 9/10

Journey

Unique multiplayer impresses once again

Let's be honest, there's just something about the way they move. They might look like armless scarf-people from a world where everyone communicates via musical runes, but the various companions you'll encounter throughout your Journey are human through and through. An AI wouldn't muck about quite so much, for a start, constantly twirling and singing on your spiritual quest to reach the top of a big old mountain in the distance.

You'll muck about in Journey too, because how could you not? This is a game about the joy of movement, the thrill of skating along the sand and gliding through the air, and happily making sing-song noises to online strangers is a big part of that. Journey can be played solo, and it's great, but you're missing out on a vital element if you don't let That Game Company subtly match you with fellow scarfies.

Multiplayer works exactly as it did on PS3. Other players appear and disappear from your game at regular intervals, with no fanfare and no mention of their usernames (at least until the end).

You could easily spend the entire game in the company of a single person, or have others dipping in and out. There isn't much of a difference, given that everyone who plays

Journey acts pretty much the same.

This is not a game where you can grief other players. Your headset won't work, and you'd have to try pretty damned hard to successfully teabag anyone. Instead, your interactions are deliberately restricted to helpful ones. You can sing – to draw your chum's attention to something, or just to say hello – and you can

YOUR HEADSET WON'T WORK, AND YOU'D HAVE TO WORK PRETTY DAMNED HARD TO TEABAG ANYONE.

IN THE FRAME

While its core is unchanged from the previous version, the increased resolution and doubled frame rate make a big difference to how Journey feels. We wouldn't want to go back to the PS3 game after this.



Journey's unique take on cooperation is still a refreshing spin on online multiplayer.



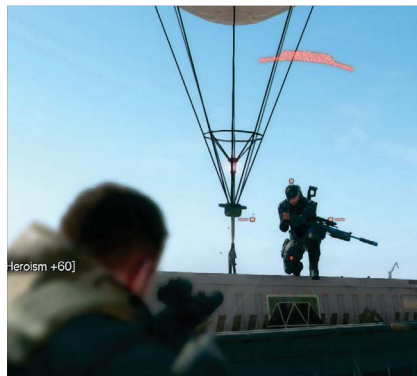
restore their scarf meter merely by floating about near them.

Under such a positive framework, no one can be a jerk, and no one wants to be, really – Journey brings out the good in people. As the length of your scarf determines how far you can jump, having a friend around is a real boon when it comes to discovering the game's hidden orbs and story shrines. Your companions will probably help you locate them, as ours did, while you'll return the favour if you ever choose to restart your Journey.

Much has been made of its fleeting, anonymous multiplayer over the years, but there's still something powerful about the act of traversing this world with a total stranger at your side. With your own fabled Journey concluded, you'll both move on to other games, or other parts of your lives, but for an hour or so you're firm friends.

VERDICT

Journey's extraordinary multiplayer is unchanged from the PS3 version. The online population is surely the healthiest it's been since 2012, so now's the time to dive in. **Tom Sykes**



MGS V: The Phantom Pain

In the wait for MGO, Konami FOBs us off...

INFO

FORMAT PS4/PS3
PUB KONAMI
DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS
REVIEW 114/115, 10/10

Let's get one thing clear: this isn't the full-on Metal Gear Online '3' (which launches on 6 Oct). Rather, a smaller aside in which players have to defend their Forward Operating Base from the invasion of other players. Likewise, you can invade other players' FOB constructs in what's a fun cat-and-mouse experience that, mechanics-wise, is a neat little bonus alongside the main game. Sadly, as of writing, it's still massively hampered by serious server troubles, which can even force you to forfeit. And problems mount further still when microtransactions are the only realistic way to build new FOBs, with the game giving pitiful bonus MB points (the currency needed to build new FOBs) on certain days. Patch it, Konami...

VERDICT

Big server issues and reliances on microtransactions get a good idea off to a poor start. Here's hoping MGO's launch doesn't have the same issue. **Johnny Cullen**



Godzilla

Surprisingly stable, still shocking

INFO

FORMAT PS4/PS3
PUB BANDAI NAMCO
DEV BANDAI NAMCO
REVIEW 114, 2/10

So yes, I'm playing Godzilla again, but this particular self-flagellation session is instead focused on the game's online component. Actually, for all its failings elsewhere, the game's only multiplayer offering, Vs mode, isn't broken. By completing certain tasks in the arduous story campaign you'll unlock different version of ol' 'Zilla from across the ages, plus other giant beasties. You can then pick one of these monstrosities and take them into a one-on-one battle with another sufferer. Refreshingly, finding other players is quick and easy and I'm not once booted from a match due to server instability. Sure, the core concept of two despicably slow lizards punching one another is terrible, but you know? It works. So I guess that's, er, *something*?

VERDICT

A lack of filtering to stop new players facing 'Zilla pros (yes, they exist) and a general dearth of variety provide this coffin's final nails. **Dom Reseigh-Lincoln**

on the store

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EXPANSION

Dying Light – The Following

Dune buggies and bows – it's a Far Cry from Haran

Techland's open-world zombie-'em-up had already taken plenty of inspiration from Far Cry, but it goes 'full Ubisoft' with its biggest bolt-on yet, which adds dune buggies and bows to the game. It's a side-story set in a huge new rural location, something that should make for a nice change of pace after the cramped slums and dingy alleyways of the base game.

Free-running agent Kyle Crane is dispatched to investigate a creepy cult, and that obviously involves a lot of mowing down zombies and leaping across cliffs. He's aided in the task by the aforementioned buggy, which can be customised with extra gubbins including blade-wheels, a flamethrower and UV lights. The vehicle even comes

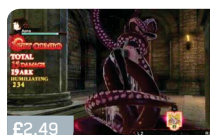
with its own skill tree, something that doesn't make any sense but let's not get pedantic.

Ever since man invented the wheel, he's longed to use it to run over reanimated dead people, and it's great to see this feature return from Techland's Dead Island. While Dying Light's previous DLC has been

piecemeal, comprising an arena mode and a couple of extra locations, The Following is a much more expansive affair that opens up the core game considerably. That bow, meanwhile, is just asking to be trained on the unsuspecting undead, along with the human foes who form a large part of this expansion.

THE FOLLOWING IS A MUCH MORE EXPANSIVE AFFAIR THAT OPENS UP THE CORE GAME CONSIDERABLY.

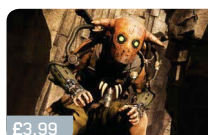
ALSO ON PS4



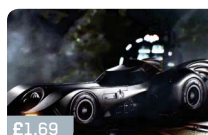
OCTOPUS ARM TRAP
Mucky torture puzzler Deception IV has a new trap for you to torment your skimpy victims with: a giant octopus arm. This is basically tentacle porn. Some people dig that.



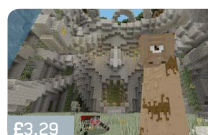
SUPersonic FURY
If you're after a more unique look for your Rocket League vehicles, this collection of battle cars, decals, paint and parts should allow you to express your individuality.



HUNTER - JACK
With his cobbled-together armour, Evolve's latest hunter looks like he's stepped right out of Mad Max. A trapper by trade, Jack wields a nifty pair of dual-pistols.



BURTON'S BATMAN
Dress up like Tim Burton's all-time great Batman with this Arkham Knight DLC, which also includes Tim's film's sleek Batmobile and a couple of new race tracks.

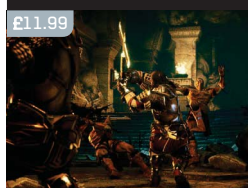


GREEK MASH-UP
This hefty Minecraft pack includes Ancient Greece-themed skins and textures, letting you play as the gods themselves as you battle minotaurs, gorgons and the like.

DLC



THE WITCHER 3 – NEW GAME PLUS
CD Projekt's generous free DLC schedule ends with the release of a New Game Plus mode. It lets you replay the game keeping hold of all of Geralt's skills and items, with better loot and tougher enemies awaiting you during the second time through.



DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION – THE DESCENT
This subterranean expansion heads to the Dwarven Deep Roads, with new companions and environments, plus fresh lore. The Inquisitor's there to investigate a series of earthquakes, and of course to duff up hordes of Darkspawn.



TROPICO 5 – PARADISE LOST
This gloriously silly add-on pack for the dictatorial strategy game contains three scenarios. Team up with dolphins to battle aliens in Surf's Up, turn your country into a perfect sustainable utopia with Gone Green, and take over the world in Supervillain. We feel best about the second.



VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE GAMES OF THE YEAR!

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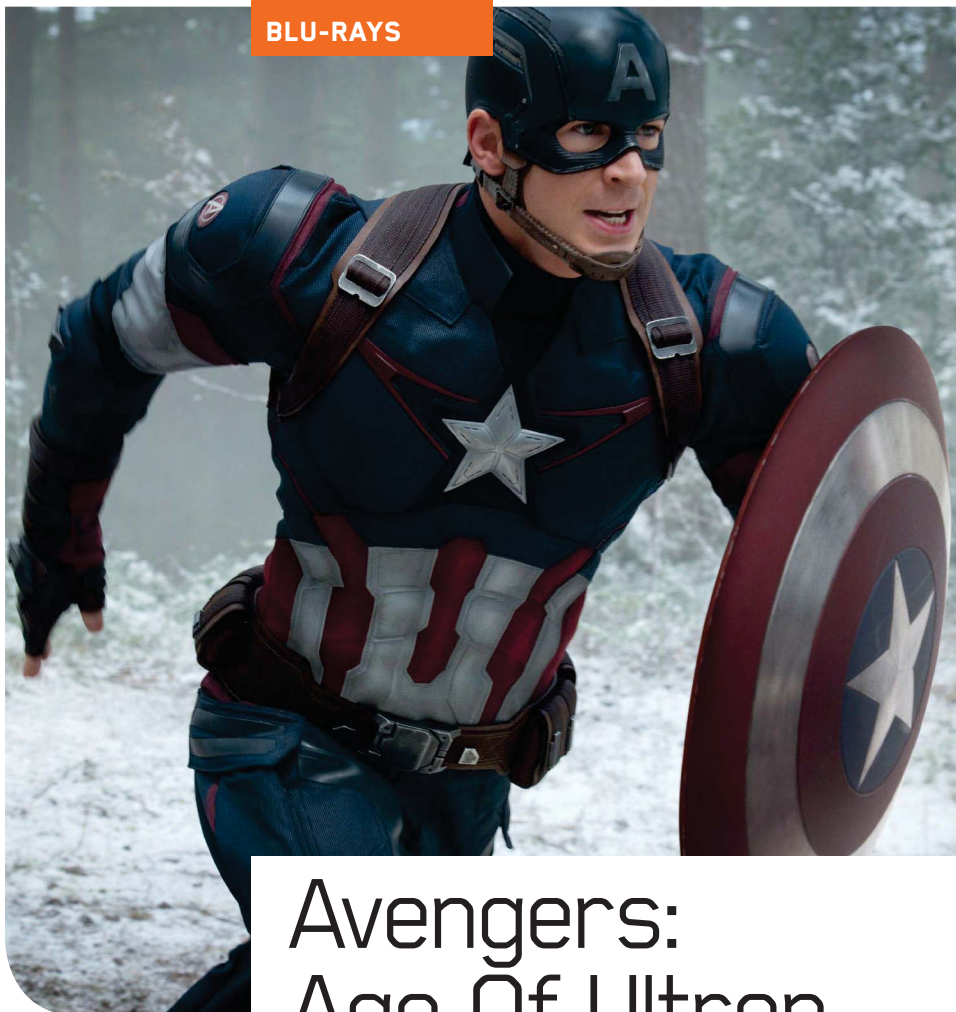
www.goldenjoystick.com

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A large, glowing orange wireframe trophy of a joystick, composed of many small dots and lines, set against a dark background with bokeh light effects. The trophy is positioned on the right side of the image, with its base reflecting on a surface below it.

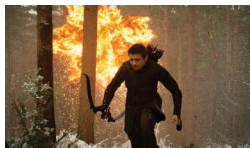
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BLU-RAYS



Avengers: Age Of Ultron

Rage Against The Machine



■ Ultron was created by Roy Thomas and first appeared in Marvel comics in 1968.

Hot on the heels of some pretty good Marvel movies, it would be easy to declare Age Of Ultron a letdown. In many ways it even fails to live up to its predecessor. But there's much to admire in Joss Whedon's sequel, not least of which is how he corrals a cast larger than the population of Slough.

Having wiped out the last remnants of Hydra, Tony Stark kickstarts the Ultron initiative – a peace-keeping robot police force designed to deter bad guys when the Avengers aren't around. Unfortunately the gem inside Loki's sceptre turns Tony's force for good into a malevolent AI bent on wiping out humanity alongside super-powered twins Wanda and Pietro Maximoff.

Age Of Ultron boasts some exceptional spectacles, but it's the irreverent character beats that

Whedon excels at. A post-Hydra-destruction party is a riot before it's rudely interrupted by Ultron. Marvel's best villain since Loki, Ultron's a sinister smart-ass capable of going quip for quip with Tony Stark.

Inevitably, with a cast this size, several characters (Thor and Black Widow) get short changed, while the film's more serious tone can feel like an ill fit for the daft antics elsewhere. Not a movie built to perfection then, but the Marvel machine shows little sign of slowing down. **Jordan Farley**

COMING SOON



MAN UP

28 SEP

A case of mistaken identity sees Simon Pegg hook up with Lake Bell in this British rom-com, the lucky swine/poor woman. (We love you really, Pegg.)



PENNY DREADFUL SEASON TWO

5 OCT

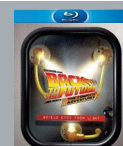
Bond writer John Logan assembles the finest out-of-copyright monsters literature has to offer.



TOMORROWLAND: A WORLD BEYOND

5 OCT

The future's bright, the future's... a theme park? Clooney turns scientist in this undeserved flop.



BACK TO THE FUTURE FLUX CAPACITOR BOXSET

5 OCT

Time to bin your old discs – this brand new set comes in Flux Capacitor packaging. How we covet!



INSIDIOUS: CHAPTER 3

12 OCT

Brace yourself for jump scares as a new family falls prey to a sinister supernatural entity in the paranormal prequel.



SURVIVOR

12 OCT

It's Alice Vs Bond as Milla Jovovich is framed and on the run from Pierce Brosnan's hitman. Not the highest A-grade stars, but worth a look.



COOTIES

12 OCT

Rainn Wilson and Elijah Wood are among the teachers forced to fight off their zombified students in this horror comedy. Zombies and comedy, what an idea!



THE LAZARUS EFFECT

19 OCT

Olivia Wilde comes back from the dead in this med school horror that sounds suspiciously like Flatliners. Fewer mullets, maybe.



JURASSIC WORLD

19 OCT

Chris Pratt and his raptor BFFs save folk from a genetically modified apex predator in the record-breaking Jurassic sequel.



SAN ANDREAS

19 OCT

The Rock vs the most electrifying earthquake in all of entertainment? Come off it, our money's got to be on the multi-time world champ. Have it, Dwayne.

Filming moved to Namibia after rain caused wildflowers to grow in the Oz outback.



Mad Max: Fury Road

The Fast And The Furiosa

Just like director George Miller, let's cut to the chase – Fury Road is the best action film of recent times, if not ever. Didn't see it on a giganto-screen? There's never been a better time to invest in an obscenely large telly...

Fury Road is two hours of relentless, turbo-charged mayhem. The pursuit begins when Max is swept up in an escape attempt across the thermonuclear wasteland, and it rarely lets up till the credits roll. Miller, a septuagenarian whose last film was Happy Feet 2, spent 20 years meticulously crafting the storyboards, and the result is a symphony of choreographed chaos that makes Need For Speed look like Driving Miss Daisy.

The sheer insanity is infectious, particularly when it comes to the irradiated War Boys who take to screaming "Witness me!" before dying in a blaze of glory. Tangible stunt work and an endless convoy of armoured

automobiles give the film a palpably perilous feel, with largely invisible CG enhancements and Junkie XL's driving score adding to the thrill ride.

Tom Hardy makes a fine Max, albeit one lacking the instant iconography of Mel Gibson's Road Warrior, but it's not his story. The emancipation of the Five Wives from tyrannical Immortan Joe is masterminded and executed by Charlize Theron's resourceful, damaged and more than capable Furiosa. Old Max is simply along for the ride – a refreshingly progressive stance for a \$150 million blockbuster.

Jordan Farley



MUSIC



IRON MAIDEN THE BOOK OF SOULS

FORMAT ALBUM ETA OUT NOW PRICE £10.99

The English heavy metal titans return with a 16th record, and Bruce Dickinson's cancer battle hasn't slowed their rollicking pace. As ever it's silly, bulging at the spine with evil demons and Mayan mythology. Epic and unreconstructed. www.ironmaiden.com

DR DRE COMPTON

FORMAT ALBUM ETA OUT NOW PRICE £9.99

You didn't forget about him, did you? The NWA legend returns with his first album in 16 years – and if you believe it, his 'grand finale'. Packed with guest spots from Snoop Dogg, Eminem and Ice Cube, it's gangsta rap, but older and wiser.

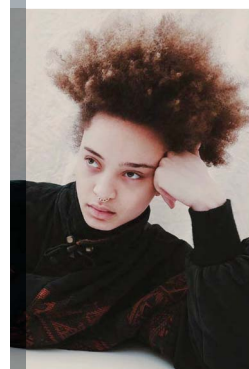
www.drdre.com



BATTLES LA DI DA DI

FORMAT ALBUM ETA OUT NOW PRICE £7.99

Battles are that rare band who can play technically complex, thinky, instrumental music and somehow make it sound catchy. 'Dot Net' and 'Summer Simmer' are what rock music might sound like in the 22nd Century. Might. bttls.com



CONNIE CONSTANCE STARS

FORMAT TRACK ETA OUT NOW PRICE £0.99

Stars, taken from Connie Constance's debut EP In The Grass, is a twilight drift through thick undergrowth that finds her soulful, wide-eyed vocals wreathed in smoky textures courtesy of an R&S Records labelmate: Camden Town's Blue Daisy. twitter.com/itsconniesworld

how to...

DOCTOR PLAYSTATION

Our console medic fixes your tech woes with actual science



THE PROBLEM

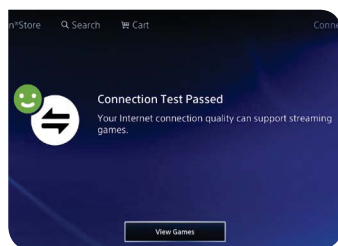
One word: backwards compatibility. Don't go back and check, that was ONE WORD. The PS3's architecture was complex, so last-gen games don't work natively with PS4's circuitry. Enter PS Now, the library with PS3 titles galore.

Stream with PS Now

Live in the Now... by playing your favourite old games

1

**STEP 1
MAKE
SURE YOUR
CONNECTION
CAN HACK IT**



You can't keep a good doc down, can you? What Doctor PlayStation lacks in credentials, he more than makes up for in ability to sneak past hospital security and nick a white coat. Today's procedure: delving deep into PlayStation Now, Sony's new streaming library powered by the Gaikai tech it bought aeons ago. The idea's simple: head over to the 'PlayStation Now' tab on the PSN Store's main page, select a game, choose your rental period (either two days or a whopping 30) and get cracking with a vintage PS3 game of your choice. However, streaming games at high fidelity involves sending and receiving data mega-fast, and thus requires a speedy broadband connection. Your first port of call is the connection test on the PS Now page. Sony recommends a connection with at least 5MB/s download speed.

2

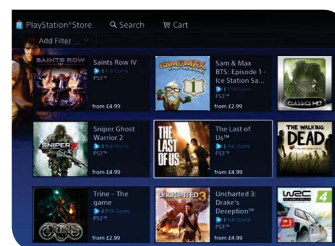
**STEP 2
LEARN THE
RULES OF
RENTAL**



Did you pass? Great. You'll notice a smidge of input lag if you're really looking out for it regardless of broadband connection speed, along with a slightly lower level of visual fidelity than when playing games natively on your console. But this is your ticket to playing the likes of Uncharted 2, Shadow Of The Colossus HD, Resident Evil 4 and, er, Catherine on your PS4, so make peace with the fact these games don't look like an UnrealEngine tech demo. Now, let's cover the pricing. Most games cost between £2.99 and £4.99 for a rental period of two days, or £5.99 and above for a 30 day rental. Simple enough, but it's also worth being aware that whatever rental period you opt for begins when you start the game, not when you pay for it – though you must start playing within 30 days of renting.

3

**STEP 3
IMPROVE THE
CONNECTION
FOR MUCH
SMOOTHER
GAMING**



You may have passed the connection test, but that green tick doesn't mean your experience will be entirely without lag, stutter, or artefacts. The doc prescribes a course of the following... Firstly, connect your PS4 to your router directly via an ethernet cable rather than Wi-Fi. Depending on the proximity of the two devices, this can stabilise your connection. Secondly, minimise the number of devices connected to your router. Phones, tablets, laptops, PCs – they're all potentially draining bandwidth and detracting from your 11th playthrough of Enslaved: Odyssey To The West. Hopefully you'll now have freed up enough bandwidth to minimise interruptions. Now, if you'll excuse me, it appears the surgeon I stole this jacket from has returned from the break room with an entourage of angry hospital staff...

THE VERDICT

The quality of your experience really depends on your connection speed. Do all you can to maximise available bandwidth and you're free to enjoy the already impressive selection of must-play titles from last-gen.



NEXT MONTH

The doc rifles around in Disney Infinity 3.0's voluminous Toy Box to bring you a Star Wars-themed build guide. Return, you must.



MR TROPHY

Iain Wilson's PSN ID is Wilbossman, and his trophy cabinet is bigger than yours.



Platinum x 64

Gold x 360

Silver x 1,410

Bronze x 5,834

Ridicule that mask all you want, Sam. At least he's dressed for the mountain weather.

LOOK AWAY!
SPOILER
ALERT

Platinum Club

Our man terrifies teens for trophies in **Until Dawn**

All of *Until Dawn*'s trophies are hidden, as many of them relate to specific story choices you need to make. Naturally that means this month's Platinum Club is chock-full of spoilers, so unless you're more concerned with shiny pots than plots you should complete at least one playthrough before reading on...

First up, you need to keep all eight protagonists alive while finding every clue and totem. Some of the decisions that save characters' lives seem counterintuitive at the time and others only reveal their effect later on – for a complete guide covering choices and collectibles head to our online walkthrough at <http://www.gamesradar.com/until-dawn-survival-guide/>.

During episode 5, interact with the hand-waving contraption before using the machete to cut off Mike's trapped fingers to earn the frankly grim **Scream Tool** award. Don't kick the wolf you encounter in episode 6, then successfully complete every QTE as Mike battles episode 9's

Wendigos to lead your furry friend to safety for **The Skillful Wolf Man**.

It's easiest to earn **The Psycho Path** by hitting the nutbar with a vase in Sam's episode 5 cinema scene, though you can also use the baseball bat if you moved it earlier, or get Ashley to attack him with the scissors if you picked them up in episode 6. Don't let

Saw-style trap get Chris to shoot Ashley to set up her **Fatal Grudge**, so that in episode 8, after completing all the Wendigo shooting QTEs with Chris, **Ashley Snaps** and lets him die by refusing to open the door. Also in episode 8, get Mike to complete **The Exorcism of Emily** by shooting her in the safe room once her bite is discovered, and investigate the sound with Ashley in episode 9 before getting her to open the trapdoor and meet her grisly demise as **You Let The Wrong One In!**.

This time, in the final scene, don't stay still so the Wendigos kill Sam, causing sole survivor Mike to destroy the creatures (and himself) by igniting the gas and proving that **This Is THE End**. As soon as you get that trophy, quit the application then reload to play that last scene again, but this time run for the switch as soon as possible to cause an **Instant Inferno** and complete **A Symphony of Horror Trophies** for your blood-soaked collection.

👉 IF YOU CARE AT ALL ABOUT THE PLOT YOU MUST COMPLETE AT LEAST ONE PLAYTHROUGH BEFORE READING ON... 👈

Emily have the flare gun from the fire tower, then **Let eM In** by sparing her life after she's bitten in episode 8.

During the tense final scene of episode 10 stay very still when required, and keep choosing the 'hide' option with Sam until everyone escapes, which should net you four ending trophies including **They All Live**. After saving everyone, you now need to flip things on their head and make sure no one survives until dawn...

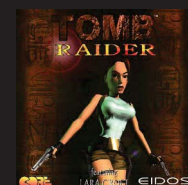
Hop back in at episode 6 and attack the caribou, then fail the following QTE so Matt falls to his death. When caught in the

JOIN THE CLUB

Hey! What's the hardest trophy you've snagged? Tell us at opm@futurenet.com

NEXT ISSUE Mr Trophy turns a Diamond Dog into a Platinum Dog in the excellent *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain*.

Shouting Lara Lara Lara
Lara, shouting... What?
The '90s will never die!



INFO

PUB EIDOS
DEV CORE DESIGN
RELEASED 1996, PS1
GET IT NOW
£4.99, PS3

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 It came out first on Sega Saturn... but never again.
- 2 Lara's ponytail was only visible in pre-rendered scenes.
- 3 Lara was originally made from only 540 polygons.

Golden Girl

Every month we celebrate the most important, innovative or just plain great games from PlayStation's past. This time we revisit the PS1 masterpiece that defined a console and gave us one of gaming's most enduring icons



Tomb Raider

So it's official: Rise Of The Tomb Raider is coming to PS4... in the holiday season of 2016. Obviously that wait's disappointing, especially considering the multi-platform 2013 Tomb Raider reboot is not only superb, but at its best on PS4. Still, her new adventure looks amazing so far, and we can rest assured that we'll get the definitive, polished version on PS4. Until then, to commemorate 20 years of PS1 here in the UK, let's celebrate Lara's wondrous debut.

It's always a pleasure to revisit the caves and crypts of the 1996 original and even now, 19 years on, it's immediately obvious why she became the darling of the 32-bit generation. Mario 64 may have just beaten her to the punch when it came to being the first true 3D adventure game, but not in Europe. In Europe, Tomb Raider was a revelation. And where Mario had toadstools, Lara had velociraptors.

Taken at face value, Tomb Raider is the perfect tech demo for the dawn of the 3D era. The camera swoops past a light-sourced, 3D heroine who draws her iconic twin pistols. Backflipping away from a pack of ravenous wolves, she tracks the creatures' movements with outstretched arms at 30 beautiful

frames per second. The hand-crafted keyframe animation is still gorgeous, and Lara commands the screen, grimacing when she fires and swan-diving into translucent waters with flair.

GIRL ABOUT TOMB

You could have sold countless PS1s on a one-room demo of that alone in 1996, but the adventure game built around that tech is equally marvellous. The aching sense of isolation and feeling of true exploration is remarkable. You can bask in the sunshine streaming in through a gap in the ceiling, feel the history from the carved stone around you and wonder what awful fate befell the mummified corpses dotted around the levels. You're never rushed.

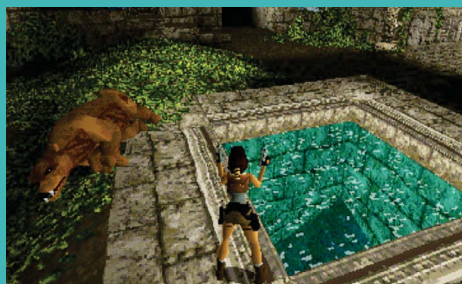
There's never an obvious breadcrumb trail that screams 'go here to proceed'. Just believable, naturalistic cave systems disguising devastatingly precise and fiendish level design, crafted to test your understanding of the... let's say 'unique' controls.

THIS REMAINS THE ONLY TRUE VERSION OF WHO LARA CROFT WAS INTENDED TO BE.

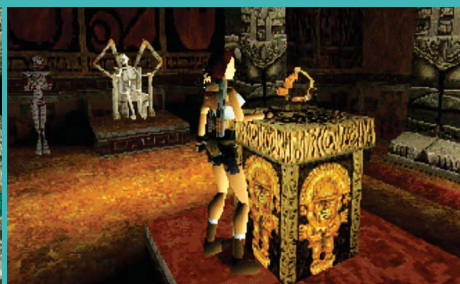
The level geometry may be full of right-angles and set to a grid, but Lara's movement is anything but locked to compass directions. Despite only supporting digital inputs (DualShock simply didn't exist in 1996), the sense of freedom in this 3D space immediately rendered supposedly cutting-edge 2D games obsolete. PlayStation literally added a new dimension to adventure games. The future was now.

Today, it's easy to note the limitations, but it shouldn't be forgotten that the mid-1990s was also a time of unprecedented technical progress. For instance, CD storage had only just hit mainstream consoles and that leap in audio fidelity was exploited superbly in Tomb Raider. The incidental music remains some of gaming's most haunting, with monks chanting and plucked melodies soaked in cavernous reverb as you fumble through dark corners and stumble upon treasures.

As a footnote, it's worth remembering that Lara was not designed to become the first virtual pin-up. Unaffected by marketing committees, TR1's Lara isn't overly sexualised. She is the real Lara Croft - Toby Gard's Lara Croft. Gard was so horrified by what the marketing department did to his creation, he quit the company just two months after the first game was complete. This remains the only true representation of what Tomb Raider was intended to be. A classy, beautiful game starring the most innocent version of what turned out to be PlayStation's most recognisable heroine. And don't worry - it won't be long until she comes home.



■ If it moves, Lara kills it. Conservation be damned.



■ Artefacts, tombs... this is the good stuff alright.



■ Love this skeleton. But his mate has the shotgun.

Name that game

Guess the four games, and their scores, from these review quotes

1 AND ANYWAY, WHO WANTS TO PLAY AS KEN FROM STREET FIGHTER WHEN YOU CAN BE BLOODY MACHO MAN INSTEAD? ”

2 AS YOU PROGRESS, IT TURNS OUT THAT RUST CAN BE BEAUTIFUL TOO, WHEN IT'S NOT CAUSING YOUR VAUXHALL CAVALIER TO DISINTEGRATE. ”

3 INITIALLY, HAVING TO SPEND EVERY WEEK PLAYING MEANINGLESS MATCHES IS AS TEDIOUS AS WATCHING CHARLTON. ”

4 IT'S A WAKE-UP CALL FOR FIRST-PERSON GAMING, RESURRECTING LONG-LOST VALUES AND PLUNGING A KNIFE INTO THE GENERIC SEQUEL. ”

ANSWERS
1 WWE All Stars, issue #57, 7/10
2 Enslaved: Odyssey to the West, issue #50, 8/10
3 PES 2009, issue #24, 9/10
4 Dishonored, issue #77, 9/10



OPM TIME MACHINE 5 YEARS AGO

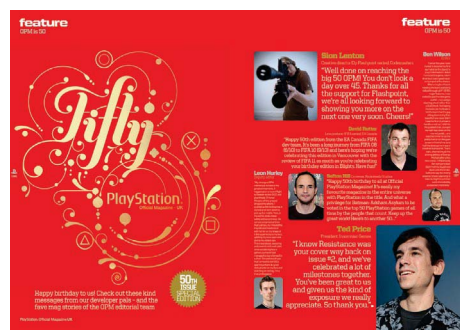
OPM #50 marked our half-century with FIFA – but it was Nathan Drake who scored the most coveted golden boot...



Above You voted for the 50 best games (see what we did there?) ever on PlayStation, with Uncharted 2 pipping some true classics to the title of 'all-time greatest'. Of course, you then undid that in issue 100 by promoting The Last Of Us to the new #1 spot...

Below left Writers and devs shared OPM memories, with Hideo Kojima drawing us a card!

Below right Among our predictions for the next 50 classics: GTA V, and... Agent. Can't win 'em all.



Far left Also earning our early adulation was Bioshock Infinite, or – as we called it in a boxout – 'Flyoshock'.

Left FIFA 11 finally saw the series score 10/10 for the first time in OPM history. Kaka by name, cracker by nature.

DON'T MAKE ME READ!

OPSM #1

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of PS1 in the UK, **OPSM #1**'s launch editor revisits the issue that started it all



WHO?

Steve Jarratt was launch editor of The Official PlayStation Magazine. It's been a while since he revisited the mag he created over 20 years ago – how does it stack up after all this time?



Twenty years is a long time in anything: politics, football, and magazine design is notorious for ageing badly. The first thing that strikes me (and I even knew it was coming) is the weird typefaces: a bizarre mixture of italics and other odd '90s fonts with underlines. However, they're not as horrific as I imagined, and will probably come back into fashion soon.

I had a habit of doing Issue Ones with a montage of images to show how 'exciting' this new subject is. Of course, with a disc taped to the front and a big mag logo consisting of 33 characters, we were pretty tight for space, but the covers did improve, thankfully.

Crikey, the news type is small. Or is that just my ageing eyesight? No, it's small. And what the hell was I doing with the US and Japanese columns (cleverly

123

INFO

PUB FUTURE PUBLISHING
DEV FUTURE PUBLISHING
RELEASED NOV 1995
GET IT NOW NOWHERE!



WHAT?

It's us, of course! Circa 1995 – long before PlayStation 4, PlayStation 3, PlayStation 2 and, here in the UK, almost before the original PlayStation. This was the magazine that launched a print dynasty.

WHAT WAS I DOING WITH THE COLUMNS? THIS WAS NOT MY FINEST HOUR.

labelled US Column and Japanese Column)? No bylines, no photos... ugh, this was not my finest hour.

Interesting story on page 17 about a new game called Tomb Raiders. This was our first view of the "rather lovely looking" title whose dreary screenshots look suspiciously like they were scanned from a Japanese magazine. Wonder whatever happened to it?

The previews section is where the art guys made a rod for their own backs with bespoke game headings made in Photoshop. Given that PS1 screens really didn't stand being blown up, these pages don't look too bad.

And then there's a feature called 'Made In Britain', showcasing the PlayStation games in development in the UK. Now it reads like a who's who of defunct studios. Gremlin Interactive, Bullfrog, Core Design, Time Warner Int, Mindscape, MicroProse... all gone. Only Team17 is still intact and actually making games these days. Like I said, 20 years is an awful long time!



Our shiny launch issue was a slim 100 pages long and cost £4.99. Adjust for inflation and that's a whopping £8.87 in today's money! Still, a review AND a demo of WipeOut is one special combination.

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO CURRENT-GEN'S GREATEST GAMES

PS4 HALL OF FAME



1

NEW!



METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

Konami might try and scrub Hideo Kojima's name from the ultimate in tactical espionage action but they'll never remove his fingerprints. While retaining that distinct storytelling and sense of wonder that defines an MGS title, MGS V offers a level of freedom and creativity unheard of in any sandbox. Grand, majestic and bittersweet, this is an instant classic.



2



GRAND THEFT AUTO V

Laughing in the face of other cross-gen ports, GTA V on PS4 is more than just a mere HD remaster. Upgraded to a glorious 1080p, it weaves everything that made the PS3 original great with new music, more dynamic weather and a game-changing FPS mode.

3



BLOODBORNE

PS4's first truly great, entirely bespoke exclusive. With the finest third-person melee combat in all of gaming, drool-worthy art design and the most twisted monsters in the biz, this is a gorgeously Gothic must-have. Be warned: it's tough.

4



DESTINY

Blurring the lines between single-player shooting and co-op camaraderie, Bungie has created an epic MMO hybrid built on incredibly fluid firefights. An essential experience with friends and the perfect platform for PS4's social features.

5



THE LAST OF US REMASTERED

This modern masterpiece just gets stronger with age, like a full-bodied stilton. A starkly brutal, emotionally honest take on the end of the world, Naughty Dog's stealth shooter is quite simply one of the best games ever, even if this PS4 port doesn't add much to it.

6

NEW!



THE WITCHER 3 WILD HUNT

The White Wolf himself finally rides onto PS4 and brings with him one of the most diverse and challenging RPG worlds ever seen. Mesmerising to look at and utterly engrossing to play, CD Projekt RED's farewell to Geralt is a new high for the genre.

7



DRIVECLUB

A coming together of fanatical graphical detail, a pleasing handling model and social features you'll actually appreciate. The competition isn't exactly fierce on PS4 for Evolution Studios' current-gen racer, but it crushes the rivals nonetheless.

8

NEW!



ALIEN: ISOLATION

Explore Ridley Scott's original vision of a horrifying future in startling fidelity with an attention to detail that borders on the obsessive. It's time to remember what made the xenomorph so scary in the first place... and then get killed by it.

9



TOWERFALL ASCENSION

You haven't lived until you've enjoyed a four-player free-for-all in this instant couchplay classic. The solo campaign is fine by itself, but almost *nothing* beats the arrow-grabbing, death-defying last-second kills of local multiplayer's mayhem.

10



BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT

Rocksteady sends the Bat out with a bang. A compelling, cathartic story adds new layers to the Dark Knight, while PS4 allows Gotham to blossom with a truly amazing engine. The stealth still sings, the fisticuffs are fab and the Batmobile is brill.

11



MINECRAFT

Bigger, better and blockier than ever before on PlayStation, this iconic build-'em-up benefits massively from PS4's additional power and gives you a creative playground 36 times the size of that on PS3 in which to build. Or lob TNT around, if you want.

12

NEW!



TEARAWAY UNFOLDED

Its handheld original is rightfully riding high in the PS Vita Hall Of Fame as its PS4 remake-of-sorts swoops onto the current-gen roster on a raft of new features. Media Molecule makes the most of all that extra power and strikes gold yet again.

13



RESOGUN

Capturing everything that made the shoot-'em-ups of old so compelling and combining it with a sumptuous voxel-based visual presentation, Resogun should come with a health warning that reads 'This game will consume your every waking moment'.

14

NEW!



JOURNEY

In a gaming landscape dominated by mindless violence and blabbering idiots, this wordless walkabout stands tall in red robes. It's about joining an online stranger and going for a wander, exploring a beautiful sandy world together in quiet awe.

15

NEW!



UNTIL DAWN

Once destined to live its life as a PS Move curio on PS3, Supermassive Games' ode to the teen slasher movie has emerged on PS4 with a bloody axe in one hand and a rather nasty looking set of consequence-based choices in the other.

16

NEW!



DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION

Following closely on the action-RPG heels of Geralt Of Rivia, Bioware's third trip to Thedas conjures something truly special. Improved combat; an ace cast of characters; a semi-open-world full of emergent gameplay; an epic story. The list goes on.

17

NEW!



PES 2016

Last year PES finally proved its worth with a FIFA-beating mixture of superior mechanics and slick gameplay. It does it again this year with a new sense of speed, versatility and physicality that's secured PES's place on the virtual footy throne.

18

NEW!



ROCKET LEAGUE

From the ashes of an obscure PS3 curio that no one can recall comes a PSN sleeper hit so addictive it's probably illegal. With a toolled up remote control car, a bootful of boost and a giant metal football, Rocket League is a slice of multiplayer heaven.

19



THE BINDING OF ISAAC: REBIRTH

Who'd have thunk digital childhood trauma could be so entertaining? This ace procedurally-generated dungeon crawler is fiendishly funny and scorchingly difficult. It also boasts a hugely endearing art style that only adds to its unique brand of grisly magic.

20



FAR CRY 4

So many eagles. Not the face! Ubisoft puts on one hell of a Really Wild Show in its frosty sandbox shooter. Often gorgeous, with an endlessly entertaining arsenal, there are few games on PS4 where it's this fun to aimlessly muck around.

21



N++

What happens when a stick ninja gets thrown into more than 2,000 colourful 2D levels and is told to dodge rockets and collect gold? You get one of the best games available on PSN - and an experience so tough it'd make Dark Souls weep.

22

NEW!



EVERYBODY'S GONE TO THE RAPTURE

With nary a bullet, killstreak or XP-leveiling system in sight, developer The Chinese Room goes against the hyperactive grain and creates a stunningly-rendered English village wrapped in a gently paced mystery.

23



FINAL FANTASY XIV: A REALM REBORN

It took three goes to finally make the FF MMO fans have always wanted, but A Realm Reborn is the one that nails it. The Heavensward expansion balloons its size, easily making it PS4's premier online world.

24

NEW!



OUTLAST

Otherwise known as the first-person horror your bowels love to hate. With nothing more than a video camera and a steady drip of adrenaline, will you choose to run and hide in the deadly asylum or attempt to shriek your assailants to death?

25

NEW!



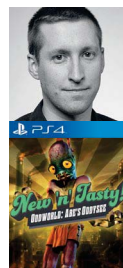
ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

Ubisoft Montreal's historically flirtatious murder sim trades the landlocked provinces of previous entries for an open ocean, a galley full of sea shanties and plenty of wrist-blade action.

BUBBLING UNDER Alternative picks

We dive into PS4's library for gold.
This month: HD re-releases.

PICK #1



ODDWORLD: NEW 'N' TASTY

Editor Matthew Pellett can't get enough of the PlayStation classic's comeback

Back in the day I spent an unhealthy amount of time in the company of Abe on PS1. Post-patches, Oddworld's New 'N' Tasty remaster is a stunning recreation of that original outing with plenty of added greatness on top. Gaming tastes may have changed since those early PS1 days, sure, but this is still a must-buy remaster that doesn't just rely on nostalgia to entertain.

PICK #2



TOMB RAIDER DEFINITIVE ED

It's a life of hunting bows and loot-filled tombs for managing art ed Milf Coppock

I don't get to finish that many games these days, especially now I'm sneaking my way around the amazing MGS V, but there was one game I enjoyed so much I completed it twice. Those nine-or-so hours I spent guiding Miss Croft through her excellent series reboot on PS3 just weren't enough. When it arrived on PS4 in 2014 it was like an old friend ready to rekindle the glory days.

“ WHEN IT CAME TO PS4 IT WAS LIKE AN OLD FRIEND READY TO REKINDLE THE GLORY DAYS. ”

PICK #3



DISHONORED: DEFINITIVE ED

Production editor Dom Reseigh-Lincoln feels the call of his old assassin ways

In terms of new goodies, Dishonored's PS4 reissue only has a scaled-up resolution and the content featured in the GOTY edition to its name, but that's why this first instalment of Corvo and co is so brilliant - every weapon, every mission, every aspect of your time in Dunwall is perfectly balanced. Now it's on PS4 too, we can all brush up on our kills before Dishonored 2 next year.



■ Dishonored: Definitive Edition is a relatively new addition to the PS4 HD remaster roster, having arrived on current-gen in August.

THE ESSENTIAL COLLECTION OF LAST-GEN CLASSICS

PS3 HALL OF FAME



1



THE LAST OF US

PS3's premier developer proves a misbehaving pooch can learn new tricks in this extraordinary adventure. In true Naughty Dog fashion, the Californian studio subverts everything from zombie and post-apocalyptic tropes to the gameplay beats of its own back catalogue. Effortlessly blending stealth, horror and action with a script destined to break your heart, TLOU is interactive storytelling at its finest.



2



GRAND THEFT AUTO V

The largest entry in the series is also one of the most ambitious games ever, but its fusion of thrilling missions, entertaining characters and scathing satire looks effortless. There can be no better way to bring a generation to a close than this.

3



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

The game that sparked a million mancrushes, with a perfectly pitched script, crunchy combat and set-pieces like no other. In three words: unprecedented, unequalled, Uncharted.

4



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

A near-perfect open-world fusion of engaging storytelling, truly compelling characters and a living environment ripe for experimentation. No sandbox since has got us quite so invested, and the bold ending still resonates to this day.

5



JOURNEY

This charming two-hour voyage crafts an incredible, immersive narrative and a genuine emotional connection using little more than near-silent figures, marvellous sand physics and floating pieces of cloth. A remarkable and unique experience.

6



MASS EFFECT 2

While Bioware's trilogy-ender sends Shepard out in fine style, it's the middle slice of the delicious sci-fi sandwich that remains its best. A brilliantly scripted action-RPG, the closing 'suicide mission' provides an incredible finale.

7



DARK SOULS

Akin to nothing else you've ever played (unless you've already played Demon's Souls). It may be as impenetrable as a vault in Fort Knox, but persevere and there's a brutal and beautiful challenge within that you will never, ever forget.

8



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

Simply the finest COD ever made. From *that* nuke to Captain Price's mesmerising ghillie suit stealth mission, few games can match Modern Warfare's thrilling scripted spectacle.

9



PORTAL 2

Only Valve could turn advanced physics, impossible puzzles and a voice cast comprised of a disembodied AI and Stephen Merchant into such a unique and undeniable work of genius. Hands down the funniest first-person experience on console.

10



METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

The most gleefully playful and imaginative stealth game on PS3. Whether you're watching a monkey slurp soda or revisiting the site of the PS1 original, no game honours its past so poignantly.

11



BIOSHOCK INFINITE

Perhaps the best narrative team of the entire generation brings one of its finest series to a staggering climax. The original game would be well deserving of a place, but the mind-boggling revelations here run a whole lot deeper.

12



BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

The most compelling bit of Bats action money can buy... that doesn't involve Heath Ledger's Joker. Thanks to an acutely detailed open-world chunk of Gotham, Rocksteady's classic just pips Arkham Asylum to this spot by the thinnest of bat-whiskers.

13



THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON ONE

Telltale has crafted some amazing stories, but the first season of The Walking Dead stands among the best downloadable games ever with emotional ties and tangible consequences for your actions.

14



HEAVY RAIN

From controversial purveyor of interactive cinema, David Cage, comes this psychological thriller that plays like no other game on the system (apart from Beyond: Two Souls, natch). A real masterpiece of twists, turns, cinematography and, uh: "JASON!"

15



LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

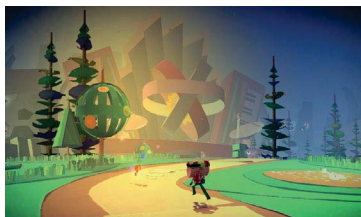
Media Molecule's second swing at the user-generated puzzle-platformer is even more essential than its predecessor, offering a raft of options so deep and rewarding the only thing holding you back are the limits of your imagination.

YOUR EVERY NEED FOR ON-THE-GO GOODNESS

PS VITA HALL OF FAME



1

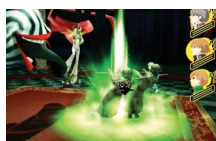


TEARAWAY

Peerless crafty platforming from Media Molecule, this time using PS Vita's raft of touchscreen/touchpad controls to surprise and delight you in new ways for hours on end. Full of whimsy, charm and enough personality to put most games to shame, Tearaway's papercraft world remains Vita's most vibrant title.



2



PERSONA 4: GOLDEN

This thoughtful and unique JRPG epic gives you another stab at high school – only this time with intrigue and superpowers instead of nerves, acne and an unpredictable vocal register.

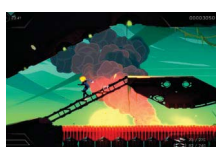
3



RAYMAN LEGENDS

Rather than losing its lustre on the move to PS Vita, Ray's second slice of sumptuous side-scrolling is even better on handheld. Touchscreen gestures make this fine platformer all the sweeter.

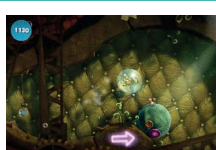
4



VELOCITY 2X

A ludicrously enjoyable puzzle/platformer hybrid that should come with a health warning. So joyous is the side-scroller's twin-stick teleporting, there's a danger you'll smile your face clean off the bone.

5



LITTLEBIGPLANET

Sackboy's back, smaller but just as lovable as ever. His platforming antics work perfectly on Vita, and the new control inputs complement the level creator brilliantly. Also: d'awwww.

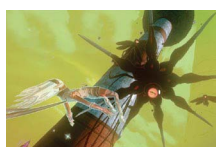
6



FINAL FANTASY X/X-2 HD REMASTER

Two examples of JRPG royalty, lovingly restored to their former glory for your portable pleasure. Their new touch controls are – gasp! – a welcome addition.

7



GRAVITY RUSH

Use a gravity-defying cat to break the laws of physics and zoom across the skies of a floating steampunk city. With stylish comic-book looks and a sassy heroine, this is a rush to remember.

8



METAL GEAR SOLID HD COLLECTION

Two of PlayStation's finest adventures scale down beautifully, with enough cutscenes to fill a transatlantic flight. Even less excuse not to play, then.

9



SPELUNKY

With more than a subtle nod of its fedora to a certain whip-wielding Dr Jones, Spelunky's procedurally-generated dungeons and platformer/roguelike mashup shines brightest on PS Vita.

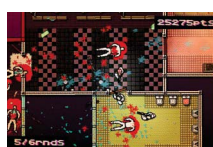
10



STEINS;GATE

This mind-bending, tongue-in-cheek visual novel takes something as simple as a mobile phone and turns it into a time-travelling extravaganza that's fit to bursting with comedy and drama.

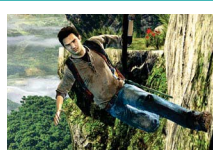
11



HOTLINE MIAMI

Part puzzler, part top-down murder-'em-up that's as brutal as almost anything else on PlayStation. It's hard but never frustrating, with instant restarts and lightning-fast gameplay.

12



UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS

Drake proves he's just as adept at adventuring on the go. A prequel story plump with classic jungle action, and crammed full of typical Uncharted charm.

13



GRIM FANDANGO

An example of genuinely timeless storytelling finally arrives on PlayStation. Double Fine's deft touch-up retains the old-school adventuring for a new generation to savour and enjoy.

14



LUMINES: ELECTRONIC SYMPHONY

Part block puzzler, part mobile disco, this is as certain to have you nodding along to ace choonage as it is to keep you returning for more reflex-testing action.

15



FEZ

Gomez charms you instantly with his perspective-shifting puzzles and pin-sharp pixel-art, then blows your mind with a world of secret languages, hidden areas and beguiling background tunes.

NEXT
MONTH

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

STAR WARS™ BATTLEFRONT™



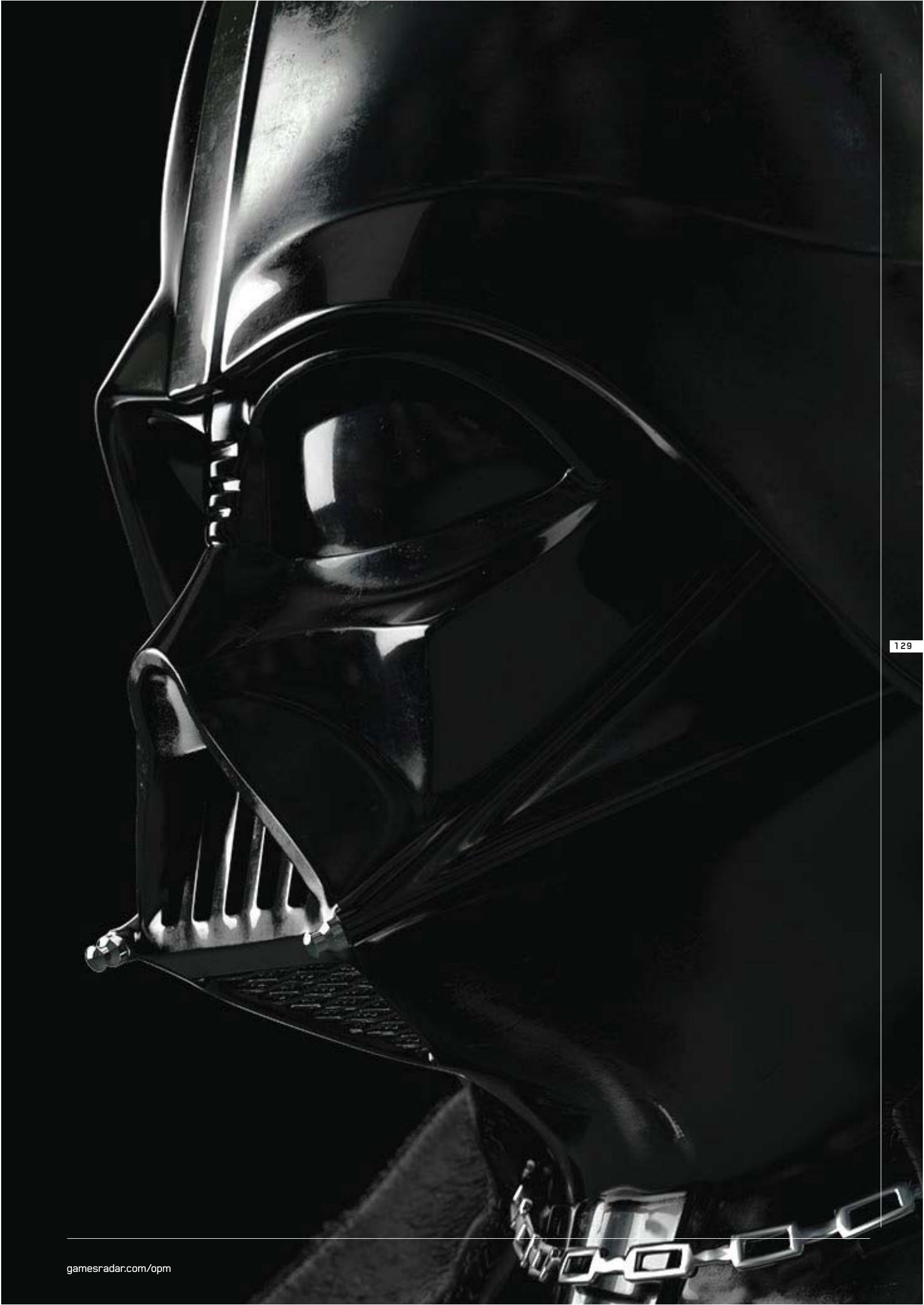
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No.31

“\$299”

SCEA president Steve Race destroys the Sega Saturn

 **FORMAT** PS1 / **PUB** SONY / **DEV** SONY / **OCCURRED** E3 1995 / **SCORE** N/A

The year: 1995. Sega, Nintendo, and console newcomers Sony are attending the first official E3 conference in May. Nintendo's follow-up to the SNES is still around a year away, so the event is essentially a battleground between Sony and good old Sega, which has yet to release the Sega Saturn in the West.

The mighty Sega kicks things off with a bang. After revealing the price of its exciting new system – \$399! – it announces that its American release date of ‘Saturday’ 2 September has been

moved up to, well, to right now. Sega has quietly shipped 30,000 Saturns to stores across the country, and you can walk into any of them and buy it right now.

It should have been a slam-dunk. Here was an exciting new console, bundled with a free copy of Virtua Fighter, and Sega had just eliminated months of waiting time. And it was exciting, for a time – until Sony Computer Entertainment Of America's Steve Race calmly took to the stage as part of Sony's company presentation.

PlayStation was expected to launch at a higher price than the

Sega Saturn. And who knows, maybe it was on-track to do just that until Sega pulled that bold stunt? Instead, Steve Race stands on the podium and makes one single utterance – just one number – before walking off to loud applause. That number? “\$299.”

Was that the number that undid the Saturn, or was it Sega's rushed release, which saw the console launch in the West with a miserably tiny selection of games? Either way, the war was won during that conference – the PlayStation launched a few months later to unprecedented success. ■

Last
Month

Resident Evil 4
Battling El Gigante, the branch-wielding giant who wants Leon dead. Yikes!

Next
Month

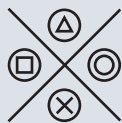
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed
Bringing down one of the galaxy's most iconic ships with The Force.

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK
P R E S E N T S



**TWENTY YEARS
OF PLAYSTATION**





TWENTY YEARS OF PLAYSTATION

“BY CREATING A POWERFUL PLATFORM AND
ECOSYSTEM, TALENTED GAME DEVELOPERS WILL
CREATE AMAZING GAMEPLAY EXPERIENCES TO
ENTERTAIN CONSUMERS IN THE GLOBAL MARKET.”

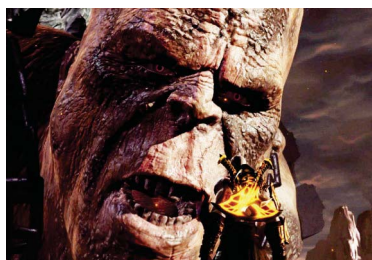
SHUHEI YOSHIDA, SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT WORLDWIDE STUDIOS PRESIDENT

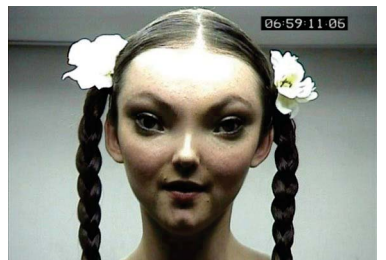
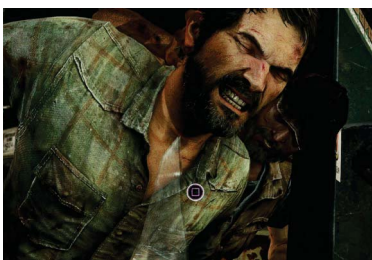
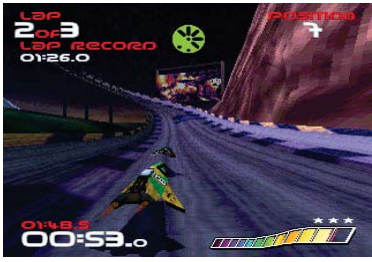
INTRODUCTION

Across two decades and six major consoles, PlayStation has helped redefine interactive entertainment for generations of gamers. This month, PlayStation celebrates its twentieth birthday here in the UK. Maybe you've been with Team PlayStation since the original WipEout and that T-rex demo, or perhaps you're new to gaming and PS4 is giving you your first ever experiences? Whatever your history with PlayStation, enjoy our look back at the last twenty years and join us to continue the celebrations online at www.gamesradar.com/DPM.

Words by Matthew Pellett, Louise Blain & Paul Randall
Design by Milford Coppock







TWENTY YEARS OF PLAYSTATION

As PlayStation turns 20 here in the UK, we look back at over two decades of greatness from Sony's gaming wonderboxes, peek ahead to its future, and select the team's favourite games





VIRTUA FIGHTER, JAPANESE PLAYSTATION LAUNCH & RIDGE RACER

What's the most influential game in PlayStation history? Metal Gear Solid? Tomb Raider? Uncharted?

Try Sega's 1993 arcade sensation *Virtua Fighter*, a 3D wireframe fighting game that, ironically, *never even made it to PlayStation*.

Virtua Fighter was unleashed upon Japanese arcades in December 1993, just a month after the formation of Sony Computer Entertainment, which was tasked with creating the first PlayStation's architecture. And as

worked together on the *original* version of PlayStation — a CD-ROM add-on for the SNES that collapsed after an acrimonious split between the two companies over rights.

But although Sony had arrived at the dance on time, it faced massive obstacles if it were to unseat the status quo. To many within the industry, PlayStation seemed destined to be merely the latest in a long line of failed attempts from lumbering tech giants who lacked the local knowledge to break into the lucrative videogames

"SONY HAD WORKED WITH NINTENDO ON THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF PS1 – A CD-ROM ADD-ON FOR THE SNES."

revealed years later by producer Ryoji Akagawa, the moment the Sony team clamped eyes on the technically impressive *Virtua Fighter* and its polygonal pugilists was the moment that the company decided to commit to making its debut console, a 3D-focused system, rather than a 2D-based one.

The final version of PlayStation hardware was completed in a timespan of just six months, quick enough for it to launch in Japan on 3 December 1994 — just a few short weeks after the competing Sega Saturn console.

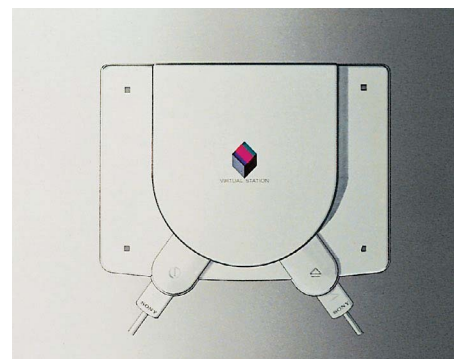
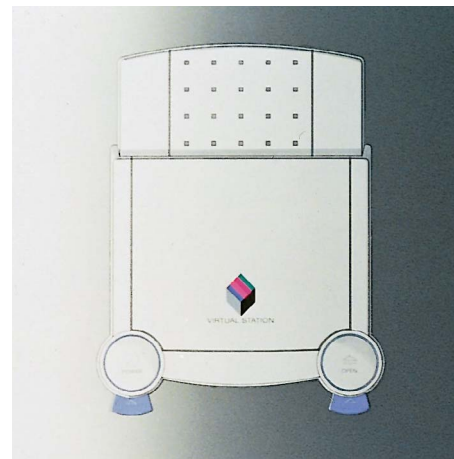
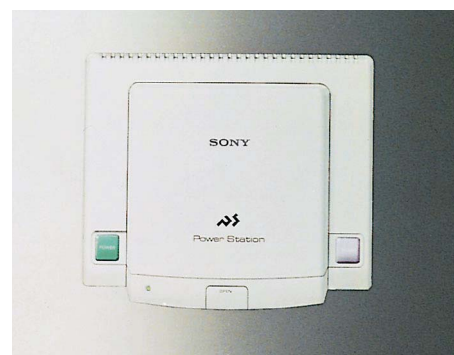
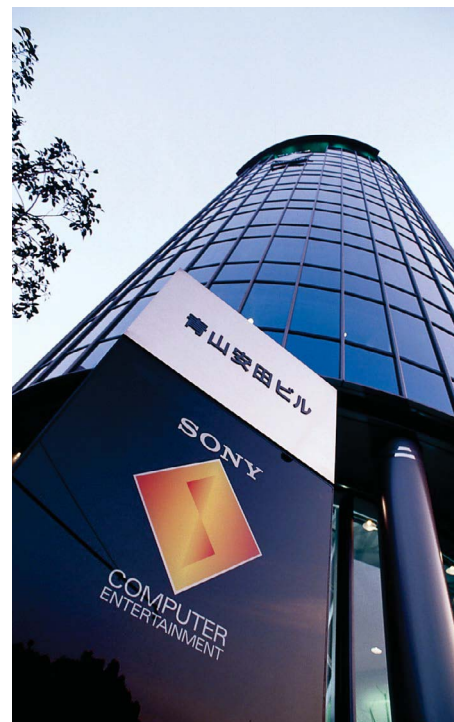
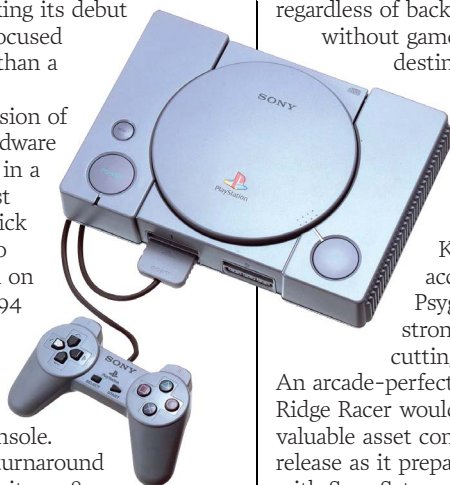
The speedy turnaround would also give it an 18 month head start over Nintendo's N64 system. Nintendo, of course, being Sony's ex-business partners, who had

market — attempts such as Philips' CD-i, or Panasonic's 3DO, both of which flopped due to high prices and a lack of software.

Sony, which had previously worked with Philips on the CD-i, realised that regardless of backing or heritage, without games, consoles are destined to fail. The

company spent much of 1994 aggressively courting third-party companies such as Namco and Konami, as well as acquiring British studio Psygnosis, giving Sony a strong in-house team and cutting edge software tools.

An arcade-perfect port of Namco's *Ridge Racer* would prove the most valuable asset come PlayStation's release as it prepared to lock heads with Sega Saturn, which launched with its own arcade-perfect port; a game known as — hey, would you believe it! — *Virtua Fighter*.



Some of the conceptual designs for the original PlayStation console. Is it just us or does that middle one look oddly like a Nintendo GameCube?



Much like the console itself, the original digital controller went through many design iterations.



Designed to work in similar way to Sega's Mega CD hardware add-on for the Mega Drive, the PS1 was originally intended to bring CD-ROM support to SNES.



PLAYSTATION COOL, THE PRICE HEARD AROUND THE WORLD & WIPEOUT

While Sega Saturn's sales initially enjoyed a slight edge, PlayStation rallied faster than anyone could have imagined, selling an impressive one million units in a period of just five months. The fledgling system also enjoyed cult popularity among importers in the West, who were attracted to PlayStation's new visuals at a time when the SNES/Mega Drive console war was stagnating so badly, algae was forming in its cartridge slots.

But Sony knew that mass market success in the West would be a whole different proposition. Sony's reputation as a technology powerhouse counted for nothing here; it needed to



They may look super blocky now, but in 1995 these visuals were the cutting edge in videogames.

Michael Jackson was among the celebs spotted at the PlayStation Party.

But then, as now, the question of 'who won E3?' would be answered in the press conference hall. Sega looked to steal the show before Sony could even get out of the blocks, with its

ninety-nine," and withdrew to rapturous applause. It became known as 'the price heard around the world.'

PLAYING IT COOL

PlayStation's aggressive price point convinced many to hold out until September. But ironically, Sega's shock tactics arguably proved to be PlayStation's biggest ally. News of Saturn's premature release caught stores and developers alike on the hop, resulting in a console that was grossly understocked and lacked killer games.

When PlayStation coolly sauntered into stores later that year with a well-rounded launch line-up including the likes of Rayman and Battle Arena Toshinden, it instantly became that year's hot property, selling 100,000 units in just two days in the US, and 350,000 in Europe by Christmas. Namco's Tekken arrived in November, and swiftly became the first PlayStation game to sell a million.

"SONY KNEW PLAYSTATION HAD TO OFFER SOMETHING SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT TO SEGA AND NINTENDO."

prove it could offer something substantially different to rivals Sega and Nintendo.

And where better to have your coming out party than at the first ever Electronics Entertainment Expo? Setting the stage for decades of excess and debauchery to come, Sony splashed out a cool four million dollars on their E3 presence; the then red-hot

mind-bending announcement that Sega Saturn would retail at \$399, and would go on sale that very instant, giving Sega a four month head start.

How could Sony possibly turn momentum back into its favour after that bombshell? As it turned out, it took SCEA president Steve Race two seconds and three words. He took to the podium, calmly uttered, "two

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 Ridge Racer
Riiiiidge Raaaa... well, you get the idea. Arcade driving doesn't get much better than this sunny 3D racer,

which helped to establish the original PlayStation as the ideal home for lavishly faithful arcade ports.

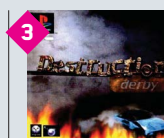
PUB NAMCO DEV NAMCO



2 Wipeout
Psygnosis' pumping futuristic racer was the game of an era - that era being the time of glowsticks, raves and

The Chemical Brothers. CDs proved their worth with the exceptional licensed techno soundtrack that accompanied it.

PUB PSYGNOSIS DEV PSYGNOSIS



Destruction Derby

Before Burnout, Reflections' smashy PS1 game provided all our car-crumpiling needs. The physics, at the time, felt hugely realistic, and we spent many an hour causing huge pile-ups in its violently satisfying Bowl arena.

PUB PSYGNOSIS DEV REFLECTIONS



009

Despite being new to the industry, Sony made all the right business moves to make PlayStation a hit.

"SEGA'S SHOCK TACTICS
WITH SATURN WOULD BECOME
PLAYSTATION'S BIGGEST ALLY."



LARA CROFT, RESIDENT EVIL & SOCIETY AGAINST PLAYSTATION

Often referred to as the 'Golden Year Of Gaming', 1996 was the year that first introduced us to some of PlayStation's most beloved franchises. And, er, Crash Bandicoot, too. (Joke!) Naughty Dog's caffeine-crazed marsupial was Sony's first serious attempt at creating an anthropomorphic mascot capable of rubbing shoulders with Mario and Sonic The Hedgehog. Sony, however, promoted him as anything but a like-for-like replacement.

Keen to distance themselves from gaming's old guard, Sony took the bold move of hiring trend-setting agency TBWA to create an advertisement campaign that would target a new untapped demographic of teen and twenty-something slackers. The controversial but extremely successful campaign featured, among other risible stunts, pictures of PlayStation pads on perforated roach papers, and flyers left in phone boxes (remember them?) advertising the services of one, "Randy Bandicoot," who lewdly promised fun times.

TEAM 3D

And while they were decent times, 1996 marked the beginning of the end of the dominance of the cheery platform mascot. PlayStation was at the vanguard of a cultural shift in gaming: demand for chili dog-



Embracing the third dimension was the crux of PS1's appeal – those original Raider tombs still give us chills.

munching hedgehogs and bouncy plumbers would soon give way for a demand for cop-munching zombies and bouncy, er, archaeologists.

We're referencing, of course, the emergence of two of PlayStation's most influential and iconic series – Resident Evil and Tomb Raider,

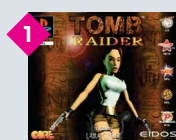
"BOTH RESIDENT EVIL AND TOMB RAIDER SHOWED OFF THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF 3D."

which would make their respective bows in August and November. Both games demonstrated, in wildly different ways, the true potential of 3D gaming – enabling players to explore immersive, emotionally-affecting virtual worlds. And the signs were that PlayStation's future was even brighter

with news that Square Enix had cancelled development of its N64-exclusive RPG Final Fantasy VII to start work on a PlayStation version. Teaser commercials suggested it was a shrewd decision, boasting graphics far beyond those seen in early cartridge-bound N64 prototypes.

By the year's end, the PlayStation juggernaut had reached warp speed with over ten million consoles sold across the globe. The console's library had mushroomed to over 200 titles – including instant classics such as WipEout 2097, Tekken 2 and more besides. Sony had done such a good job of positioning PlayStation as the 'must have' console that it felt comfortable enough to run a now-famous anti-ad TV campaign, in which a conservative group known as Society Against PlayStation (SAPS) extolled the virtues of buying a harmless, wholesome stick over the morally bankrupt PlayStation console. Oh Sony, you scamp.

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



original Tomb Raider remains one of the smartest exploration games of the 1990s. Its use of 3D space was exceptional.

PUB EIDOS DEV CORE DESIGN



Romero's undead filmography. The lines might be hokey (in fact, they definitely are) but that dog scare still makes us jump.

PUB CAPCOM DEV CAPCOM



into one of the PlayStation's biggest stars. Now if only Naughty Dog would return to its Taz-like marsupial hero...

PUB SONY DEV NAUGHTY DOG



FINAL FANTASY VII, PARAPPA THE RAPPER & ANALOGUE CONTROLS

By 1997, it was becoming clear that Sega Saturn was destined to fail. By the summer of that year, Sega's share of the market had plummeted to just 12%. That left just one company standing in the way of PlayStation and world domination – Sony's old adversary, Nintendo.

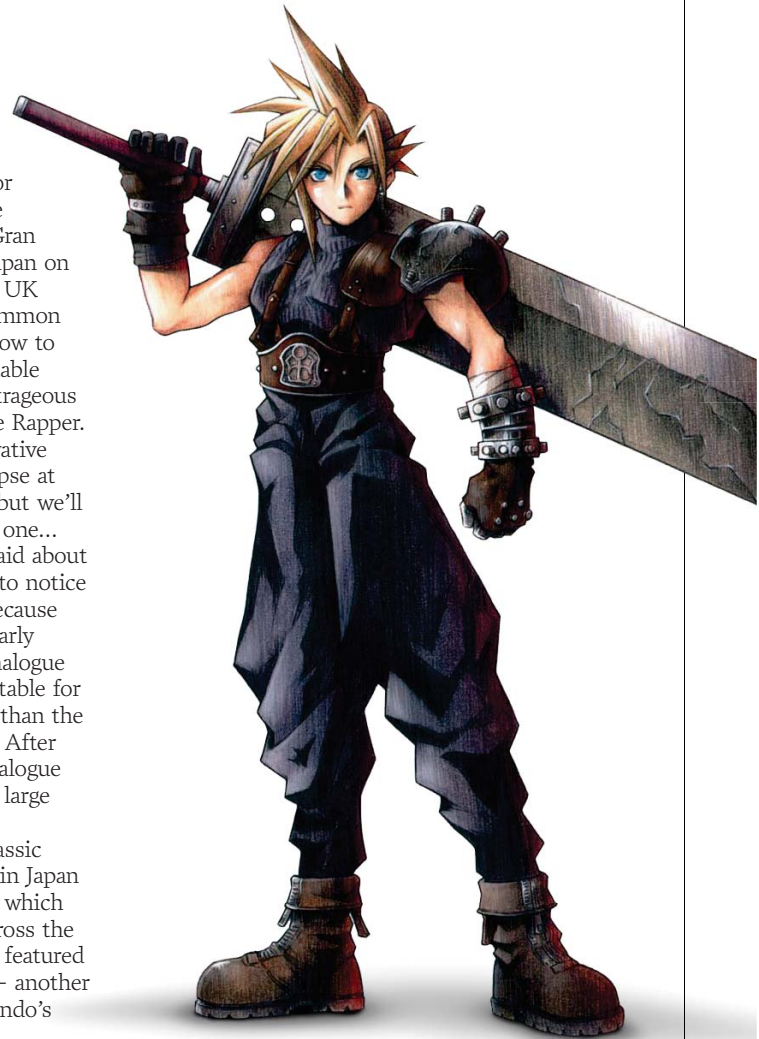
The much-delayed Nintendo 64 system finally arrived in Europe in March, but by this point Sony was almost too busy pumping out the hits to notice. Final Fantasy VII, the RPG that remains the genre's benchmark over 15 years later, arrived in Japan in January and in the rest of the world that autumn. Success was instant: in the three days following its launch in Japan, Final Fantasy VII shifted a whopping 2.3 million copies.

DUALSHOCK RISING

This was to be expected, given the Japanese audience had long gone ga-ga for Square Enix's RPG output. What wasn't to be expected however, was that it would also replicate this success stateside, selling one million copies before the calendars flipped to 1998. A long and extensive advertising campaign, which included theatrical adverts and Marvel comic book spin-offs, pulled off the impressive feat of turning PlayStation's too-cool-for-school audience into an army of nerdy stat crunchers.

1997 saw PlayStation's catalogue grow ever more diverse, catering for almost every need. If you were looking for driving lessons, for example, you could go for the so-serious-it-hurts car sim Gran Turismo, which debuted in Japan on 23 December ahead of its '98 UK release, or you could leave common sense at the door and learn how to three-point turn with an irritable rapping moose in beyond-outrageous rhythm actioner PaRappa The Rapper. Amid this onslaught of innovative titles, we also got a first glimpse at Metal Gear Solid at E3 1997, but we'll let 1998 tell the story of that one...

Now, remember what we said about Sony being 'almost' too busy to notice Nintendo? We say 'almost', because someone at Sony HQ had clearly noticed N64's ultra-comfy analogue stick, which was far more suitable for movement across a 3D plane than the rigid directional pads of yore. After trialling a short-lived dual analogue controller with rib-piercingly large handlebars, Sony released its first proper revision of the classic PlayStation controller design in Japan on 20 November. DualShock, which added two analogue sticks across the bottom of the controller, also featured two built-in rumble motors – another feature 'borrowed' from Nintendo's 64-bit console.



THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



PlayStation

When its gripping story was over, we were hooked for life. Now all we have to do is wait for that PS4 Remake...

PUB SQUARE DEV SQUARE



PlayStation

The original Metroidvania, Symphony swapped the linear exploration of old Castlevanias for an expansive Gothic environment that made full use of the CD format.

PUB KONAMI DEV KONAMI



PlayStation

Kick, punch, it's all in the mind, with NanaOn-Sha's inimitable rhythm action game. Its systems have been repurposed since, but PaRappa remains a true original, set in its own weird, hilarious universe.

PUB SONY DEV NANAON-SHA



METAL GEAR SOLID, GRAN TURISMO & DUALSHOCK

How about this for an E3 line-up? Gran Turismo, Metal Gear Solid, Tekken 3, Silent Hill, Parasite Eve, Syphon Filter and Twisted Metal 3. 1998 saw PlayStation in the prime of its life. While Nintendo struggled to fill its games calendar and Sega officially announced the discontinuation of Sega Saturn, PlayStation's cup continued to runneth over. By the end of the year, the number of consoles shipped stood at nearly 50m worldwide.

By this point in the console's lifecycle, developers had begun to

Indeed, it appeared developers were thirsty to extract more from PlayStation hardware. DualShock made it to western shores in May, alongside the international release of Gran Turismo – the first game to make use of the analogue sticks and the internal rumbling motors, which were used to simulate the physical feedback of a racetrack. By August, DualShock was established as the de facto default pad for PlayStation, although a game wouldn't come along that made the new controller mandatory until the arrival of monkey bonanza Ape Escape in 1999.



“WITH NINE MILLION UNITS SOLD IN 1998, PLAYSTATION HAD EMERGED AS THE WINNER OF THE FIFTH GEN.”

master PlayStation's complex architecture and games were becoming ever more confident – and no game oozed more pizzazz than Hideo Kojima's magnum opus, Metal Gear Solid, which arrived in Japan and the US a few months before it debuted in the UK in Feb 1999. It was, of course, a playful espionage title designed to make use of every last one of PS1's design features – including one antagonist breaking the fourth wall by reading your memory card.

Although Nintendo 64 remained in decent health throughout 1998, selling an estimated nine million units that year, PlayStation had emerged the clear winner of the fifth generation console war. However, there was little time for Sony to plump up its laurels and have a good rest – on 27 November, Sega released Dreamcast over in Japan, kickstarting the sixth generation of the console wars. Sony's response to the Dreamcast would be swift, and it would be decisive.

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



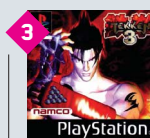
1 Resident Evil 2
With the T-Virus running rampant in Raccoon City, the scene was set for another thrilling survival horror from Shinji Mikami and Hideki Kamiya. Great characters, a fresh setting and increased stakes made this an essential sequel.

PUB CAPCOM DEV CAPCOM



2 Gran Turismo
Racing sims came to PlayStation in earnest with Gran Turismo, an insanely detailed driving game that gave us the life of a car enthusiast without requiring all that money and driveway space. It's rosey now, but in '98 it was mind-blowing.

PUB SONY DEV POLYPHONY DIGITAL



3 Tekken 3
The fifth-best-selling PlayStation game of all-time, and rightly so. Tekken 3 is PlayStation's seminal fighter and remains one of the genre's milestone releases. It also enabled players to exploit each arena's 3D space for the first time.

PUB NAMCO DEV NAMCO



MENTAL WEALTH, POCKETSTATION, DUALSHOCK & APE ESCAPE

Let me tell you what bugs me about the human endeavour," smirked a Scottish girl with eyes that were just a *tad* too far apart for our liking. Yup, we're looking at 1999, the year when you could never underestimate the power of PlayStation or remove the sense of genuine unease from the back of your neck after watching the now-legendary TV ad.

While we dangled our legs off the precipice of the 20th century, music hoard Napster made its debut on that pesky internet you had to physically push your Mum off the phone to use and Japan got the ultimate PlayStation accessory in the shape of PocketStation. Yes, we're still green



With Crash channelling Mario Kart and survival horror going prehistoric and psychological, '99 was very eclectic.

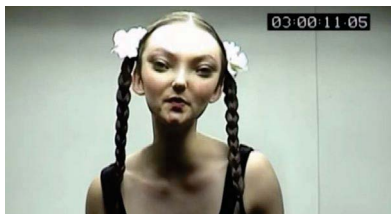
eyed and a bit upset about the whole thing, but this little memory card peripheral was a true phenomenon with its LCD display, infra red comms and the ability to carry your PlayStation around in your pocket for some mini-game fun. The initial run of 60,000 sold out immediately and

were only just appearing to transform our gaming horizons forever. Plus, Ape Escape, the second ever title from Sony Japan Studio, became the first game to make dual analogue sticks mandatory with our now-staple movement and camera controls.

Studio-wise, SCE Santa Monica was launched as PlayStation went from strength to strength and, while Nintendo teased the tech behind what would become the GameCube

and Sega celebrated the launch of their Dreamcast with a joy akin to that of Titanic's passengers on the first night of its maiden voyage, Sony took to the Tokyo Game Show in September and revealed a certain black box. Showing off its pixel processing skills with Tekken Tag Tournament and Gran Turismo 3, PlayStation 2 was ready to take over the world.

"APE ESCAPE WAS THE FIRST GAME TO MAKE DUALSHOCK'S ANALOGUE STICKS MANDATORY."



Sony's edgy and downright surreal marketing strategy extended into PS2's lifetime, too.

Sony just couldn't make the little box fast enough to supply demand. Both EU and NA releases were scrapped and we never got to take Crash Bandicoot on the romantic date to the cinema we'd always dreamed of. *sob*

Meanwhile, the big grey box was half a decade old, but you wouldn't know it as games such as Crash Team Racing, Dino Crisis and Silent Hill



THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 Konami transformed a top-down stealth game into a cinematic blockbuster with the original MGS. This is leaner and less self-indulgent than its sequels, but Kojima's at his maddest in the infamous Psycho Mantis fight.

PUB KONAMI DEV KONAMI



2 Namco continued to demonstrate its mastery of the original PlayStation with Ridge Racer Type 4, a stark technological improvement that made the original look like a game from a previous gen. Fast, slick and gorgeous drifting.

PUB NAMCO DEV NAMCO



3 If Resident Evil was a Romero flick, then Silent Hill was a David Lynch movie with the creepy surrealism at maximum. It's a psychological horror that plays on your deepest fears, then smothers them in acres of dense, claustrophobic fog.

PUB KONAMI DEV TEAM SILENT



PLAYSTATION 2, TIMESPLITTERS, PSONE & METAL GEAR SOLID 2

Nothing exploded, the power didn't fizzle out and there wasn't a single zombie involved, so the proposed Y2K apocalypse was, quite frankly, a bit of a disappointment. Meanwhile, more importantly, the console that would go on to be the best-selling in history (with more than 155 million units) launched in Japan in the third month of the new millennium.

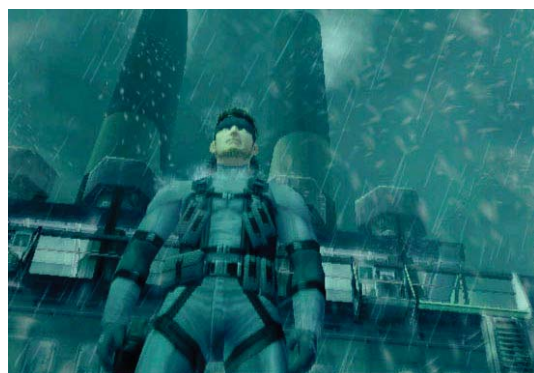
We might sound biased but PlayStation 2, with its powerful Emotion Engine CPU and in-built DVD player, was a home console revolution. Launched in North America in October and our fair green lands a month later — with titles such as TimeSplitters, Tekken Tag Tournament and Ridge Racer V — the black box was instantly, predictably in dire shortage.

So what did everyone do when they couldn't get a PlayStation 2 for Christmas? Well, some sold a kidney and took themselves to eBay to spend over the odds and everyone else bought a Dre... PSone.

That's right. In the same year it launched its sixth gen console, Sony had the wise idea to release a slimmed down version of the original PlayStation. Positively cute with rounded edges, and nearly the same size as the original DualShock, the PSone started Sony's now-regular obsession with console shrinkage. It also very quickly started nailing Sega's Dream coffin shut as it went on to outsell all other consoles for the rest of the year — including PS2.

TOP GEAR

When it came to games, nothing else mattered other than Kojima's spectacular E3 announcement of Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty. The looping five-minute trailer at the Konami stand left E3 goers with their jaws dropping along the showfloor at the level of detail invading their eyeballs. From water that just couldn't



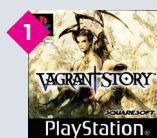
As unrepresentative of the rest of the game it would prove to be, the Tanker level became a symbol of PlayStation 2's power.

"WHEN IT CAME TO PS2 GAMES, NOTHING ELSE REALLY MATTERED OTHER THAN MGS2."

be possible on a games console as Snake's boots splashed up flights of stairs to lighting effects we'd never even dreamed of.

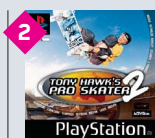
In the heady days before shiny pre-rendered trailers and booming Dark Knight-influenced soundtracks, we were gifted a rich gameplay-based treat that sent the hype train for Sons Of Liberty into overload. This was the future and it was from Hideo Kojima.

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 Vagrant Story
Yasumi Matsuno's classic has one of gaming's best translations, its cod-Shakespearean turns-of-phrase imbuing this story of manipulation and ancient magic with an almost literary depth.

PUB SQUARE DEV SQUARE



2 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
The Birdman returned to PlayStation with a bunch of new tricks in tow, including the first appearance of manuals, and the Create-A-Skater and Park Editor features that enhanced his games considerably.

PUB ACTIVISION DEV NEVERSOFT



3 SSX
Launch games don't have the best reputations, but when SSX arrived with PlayStation 2 it was a breath of fresh alpine air. It certainly wasn't the first snowboarding game, but its memorable characters and complex combos mean it's still one of the best.

PUB EA DEV EA CANADA



PS2 also had a big hand in DVD's success as a format – placing it in even more homes.

“WITH ITS IN-BUILT DVD PLAYER AND EMOTION ENGINE CPU, PS2 WAS A REVOLUTION.”



GRAND THEFT AUTO III, GRAN TURISMO 3, REZ & SCREEN ENVY

So this was the year that both Microsoft and Nintendo bravely joined the sixth console generation fray with launches of both the original Xbox and GameCube – but 2001 was still very much the year of PlayStation 2.

With supply of the console thankfully more plentiful, we were treated to the joys of Gran Turismo 3, Silent Hill 2 and the legendary Ico. Also, a game set in a parody New York might have made some headlines as it exploded onto PS2 in October. Grand Theft Auto III became the year's best-selling game as the series dropped its top-down sensibilities and took to 3D for the first time, effortlessly and controversially changing the games landscape forever. GTA III went on to shift more than 17.33 million copies in its lifetime.

HARDWARE TIMES

As Sega's poor Dreamcast was discontinued in the year of Sonic's tenth birthday – cheer up, pal, you get really long legs in 13 years – Sony continued world domination, snapping up Crash Bandicoot developer Naughty Dog and transforming Wipeout developer Psygnosis into Studio Liverpool.

2001 was also the year of interesting peripherals as Japan was gifted the



'Special Pack' edition of music title Rez, which came with none other than a Trance Vibrator for you to, er, feel the music. It even came in a protective pouch. Wait. Oh never mind... Slightly less titillating, but still exciting if you wanted to take your



GTA III made headlines in the mainstream media thanks to its violence – so of course it sold tons.

PSone in the car, was the release of an LCD screen to attach to your console.

We'll admit that it was probably cheaper to buy a Game Boy Advance, but if you were dedicated enough, the LCD display could be bought with an in-car charger to make sure you never missed a moment of GOTY contender Final Fantasy IX. Alternatively, we're pretty sure you could still play Snake on your Nokia 3310 at this point.

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



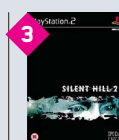
1 Grand Theft Auto III
It must have been an arduous undertaking, bringing Grand Theft Auto into the third dimension, but it paid off handsomely. GTA III ushered in a new era of open-world 3D games, essentially saying to every other developer, "Come on, try and match this."

PUB ROCKSTAR GAMES DEV DMA DESIGN



2 Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec
The first, full-fat PS2 GT was a revelation. Taking the realistic driving model and no-nonsense physics of its forebears, A-Spec added stellar graphics and a career mode that made every new car feel like a hard-earned treasure.

PUB SONY DEV POLYPHONY DIGITAL



3 Silent Hill 2
While the original had a more conventional story about a demonic cult, this sequel turned its focus inwards. In a city that mirrors your greatest fears, the only things tormenting our hero were his own traumatic thoughts (manifesting as hideous monsters).

PUB KONAMI DEV TEAM SILENT



RATCHET & CLANK, KINGDOM HEARTS, A CONNECTED FUTURE & LINUX?!

As Xbox sneaked further across the world with releases in Japan, Europe and Australia, PS2 was well into the swing of things and concentrating on new games such as Ratchet & Clank, Sly Raccoon and the Disneyfied joys of the original Kingdom Hearts.

There was clearly something in the water at Sony as our favourite new series were born onto PlayStation 2 at an almost alarming rate and, to proudly confirm its dominance, Sony announced that 40 million PS2s had shipped worldwide by September 2002. A slew of alternative colours to the standard black one were also introduced – lemon yellow, anyone?



This was the year the cutesy platformer ruled on PS2 with Ratchet, Sly and Sora's Disney pals on fine form.



Despite most of us still needing that crunchy dial-up tone, the next step for console gaming was that new-fangled internet thingummy and Sony launched its PS2 Network Play service across North America in August before rolling out across the EU the following year. This required a

Network Adaptor, which came in two flavours: dial-up, and ethernet for those of us lucky enough to be connected to broadband. Suddenly it wasn't just PC gamers who could easily play online and, while it wasn't quite the PSN we now know, it was a key step in taking us into the digital frontier. Okay, maybe we've been watching too much Tron...

IN THE LINUX OF FIRE

And for those who had *definitely* been watching too much Tron was the little known Linux For PlayStation 2 Kit from Sony. Yes, that really was a thing – with a keyboard and mouse, 40GB HDD, a PS2 Network Adaptor and a Linux-based operating system, this was the best way to transform your ultimate gaming device into a, well, pretty mediocre PC that demanded an intimate knowledge of the Linux operating system to get it working. But it's the fact that you could if you wanted to, right?

"SONY ANNOUNCED THAT 40 MILLION PLAYSTATION 2S HAD SHIPPED WORLDWIDE BY SEPTEMBER 2002."



THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

Grand Theft Auto's obsession with wealth takes on a new meaning in the '80s-set Vice City, a decade best summarised by the Wall Street quote, "Greed is good." The soundtrack, obviously, was one of the series' best.

PUB ROCKSTAR GAMES **DEV** ROCKSTAR NORTH



Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty

Rather than trying to top the original Metal Gear Solid, Hideo Kojima turned it on its head. MGS2 famously replaced its grizzled hero Snake with an androgynous rookie named Raiden – but the mindgames didn't end there...

PUB KONAMI **DEV** KONAMI



TimeSplitters 2

This tongue-in-cheek TimeSplitters sequel was PS2's answer to GoldenEye – fitting, as developer Free Radical emerged from Rare. A time-hopping FPS with some of the best multiplayer around, we played a *lot* of its split-screen deathmatch.

PUB EIDOS **DEV** FREE RADICAL



PSP ANNOUNCEMENT, EYE TOY LAUNCH & HUGE PS2 SALES

This is the Walkman of the 21st century!" enthused Sony CEO Jose Vileta as PSP was revealed in a shock announcement at E3 2003. The perfect quote embodiment of how unaware the world was of Apple looming darkly on the horizon wearing nothing but a pair of white earbuds, it was an innocently confident statement.

Launched by Ken Kutaragi on-stage, PlayStation Portable would have a 4.5-inch screen (sending Nintendo and Nokia into waves of panic) and use an all-new technology known as Universal Media Discs – complete



Long before PS Move, there was EyeToy. Sure, you looked like a plum playing it, but it was one hell of a workout.

EyeToy camera and its accompanying EyeToy Play software. Plate-spinning, keepy-ups and Wishi Washi became the norm, and we can't be the only ones who ended up not being able to lift our morning coffee the day after

However, it was the first device to use the XMB UI and even featured software for video, image and audio editing, making it an interesting precursor to our multifaceted new generation box. We clearly weren't ready for such levels of usefulness or something that looked heavy enough to break the TV cabinet, so it's no surprise the poor old PSX never made it to Western homes.

"PSX WAS A PRECURSOR TO MODERN CONSOLES WITH ITS XMB UI AND VIDEO EDITING SOFTWARE."

with a menacing whirr every time you tried to play a game via this kooky new format. Concept images of PSP were revealed later in the year without an analogue stick, which duly sent the games press into a tizzy.

Although we didn't get to clap eyes on the sleek little handheld console – with its token analogue nub restored – until the following year, we did get to look utterly ridiculous in our own living rooms with the release of the

an intense session of UFO Juggler. No? Just us? Yup, just us...

A massive five million PlayStation 2s were sold in the UK alone by December 2003 in the lead up to Christmas, so Sony was on a serious high. However, its PSX system was significantly less successful. Released only in Japan in December before being discontinued in 2005, this DVR meets PS2 was a commercial flop thanks to its high retail price.



THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time

Time powers have been in everything from shooters to racing games, but they felt revitalising when The Sands Of Time rocked up. The sequel dropped the ball tonally, but the original shows how reboots should be done.

PUB UBISOFT DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL



2 Viewtiful Joe

Cel-shaded beat-'em-up Viewtiful Joe might be Hideki Kamiya's weirdest game, and that's saying a lot about the director of Bayonetta. It stars a film-obsessed man named Joe, who enters Movieland to rescue his girlfriend. Then learns to bend time, natch.

PUB CAPCOM DEV CLOVER STUDIO



3 Amplitude

Before Harmonix had the idea of bundling their games with fake plastic instruments, they had the player control beat-matching spaceships in abstract, musical worlds. Amplitude was also the rocky sequel to the dancey Frequency, which landed in 2001.

PUB SONY DEV HARMONIX



GTA SAN ANDREAS, BURNOUT 3, PSP & GOD OF WAR REVEALED

Doesn't it feel like gaming magazines label every year the, "best ever," in their end-of-year write-ups? Well, this was the year they *meant* it. *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* was the year's biggest release, in more ways than one. Rockstar's Californian debut weighed in with a colossal world map almost 13 square miles in size, into which it packed three very different cities and framed them with acres of wide open space in which to lose yourself.

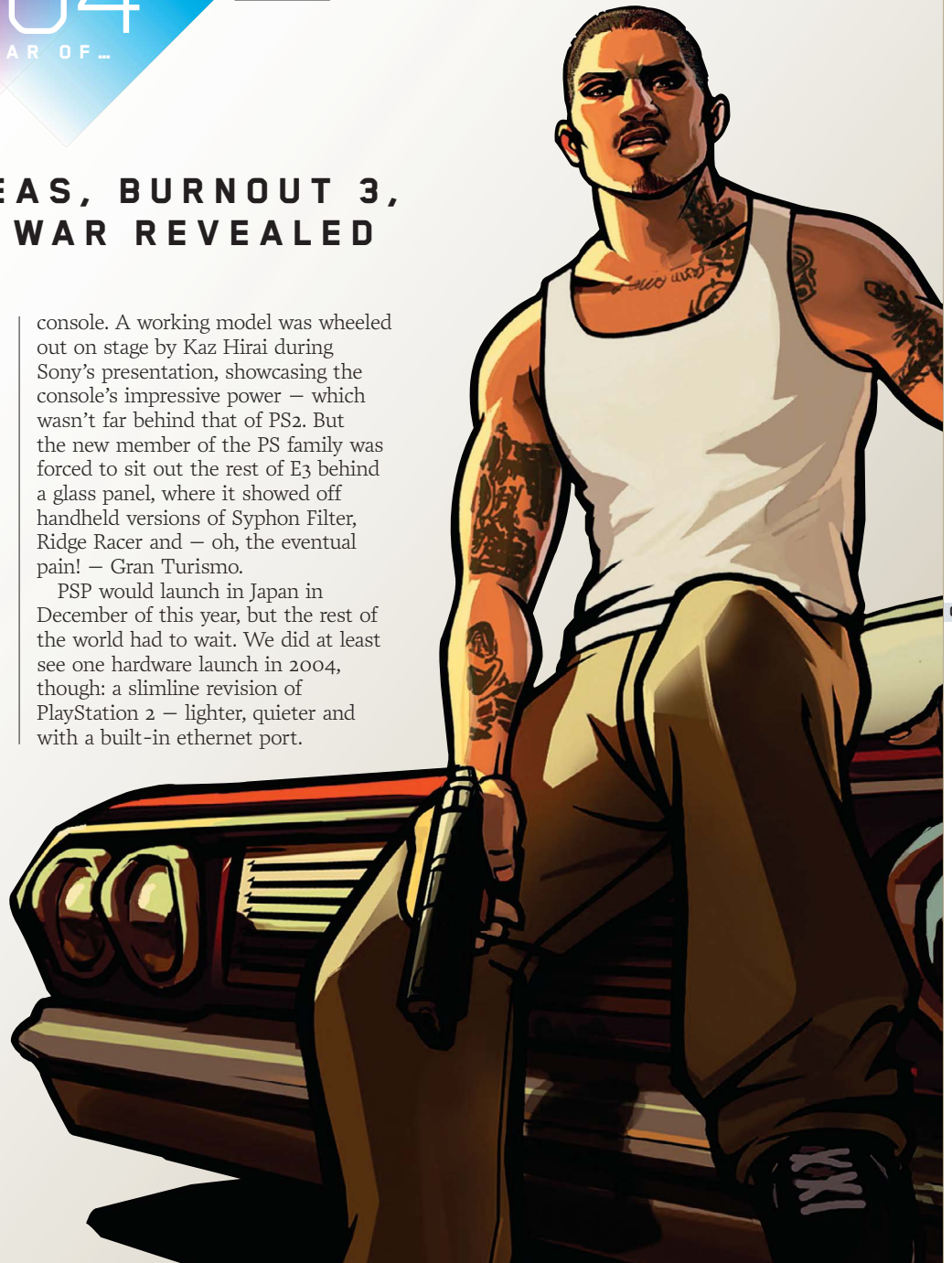
It also introduced numerous RPG elements, none more memorable than the ability to make CJ eat hamburgers until he vommed all over the shop. Although *San Andreas* is dwarfed by today's open-worlds, at the time such scale was unheard of on console.

Other big releases this year included *MGS3* in the US (turn over for its UK glory) – a bold prequel that yinked the series out of dank bases and into the sunshine of the Russian jungle – and *Burnout 3*, an aggressive racer that cemented Criterion's reputation as king of all racers.

But despite this embarrassment of riches, gamers' eyes, as ever, drifted towards the future. Sony had a busy E3, showing glimpses of *Gran Turismo 4* and *God Of War*, among others, but the biggest news coming out of the show was the unveiling of *PlayStation Portable* – Sony's first handheld

console. A working model was wheeled out on stage by Kaz Hirai during Sony's presentation, showcasing the console's impressive power – which wasn't far behind that of PS2. But the new member of the PS family was forced to sit out the rest of E3 behind a glass panel, where it showed off handheld versions of *Syphon Filter*, *Ridge Racer* and – oh, the eventual pain! – *Gran Turismo*.

PSP would launch in Japan in December of this year, but the rest of the world had to wait. We did at least see one hardware launch in 2004, though: a slimline revision of *PlayStation 2* – lighter, quieter and with a built-in ethernet port.



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THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas

In an effort to outdo their previous games, Rockstar somehow bundled *three* cities into *San Andreas*.

Certain systems, such as weight gain, wouldn't be repeated, giving this third entry a unique feel.

PUB ROCKSTAR GAMES DEV ROCKSTAR NORTH



2 Burnout 3: Takedown

Car crashes, on the whole, are best avoided, but when the only things hurt are vehicles, it's fine to indulge in a bit of virtual rubbernecking.

New to *Burnout 3* were the oh-so-moreish *Takedowns*, which rewarded you for smashing rivals mid-race.

PUB EA DEV CRITERION GAMES



3 Katamari Damacy

Okay, technically Keita Takahashi's physics playground didn't get a release in the UK (a fact we still lament to this day), but that didn't stop it from being one of the most simple yet devilishly addictive must-have imports of 2004.

PUB NAMCO DEV NAMCO



PS3 REVEALED, PSP LAUNCHED, GOD OF WAR & RESIDENT EVIL 4 RELEASED

On 16 May 2005, PlayStation 3 was unveiled, and we caught our first true glimpse of what the next generation was going to look like. Or *did* we? Sony's E3 2005 presentation proved to be one of the most controversial in the show's history, as almost-impossibly gorgeous gameplay footage of early PS3 titles such as Killzone 2, MotorStorm and Gran Turismo 5 sent jaws dropping so far through the floor they were walloping wallabies up the wazoo. When these titles eventually hit shop shelves in the years that followed, the reality was somewhat humbler.

The video reels, it transpired, were merely target render footage of what PS3 was ultimately capable of – not what we could expect to see appearing on the system in the first couple of years. Still, the trailers helped divert attention away from the fact that PS3 wouldn't launch until 2006 – giving the rival Xbox 360 a year's head start. But it couldn't divert attention away from *that* boomerang controller. Although, in retrospect, the curved batarang design makes a lot more sense now we know that it was intended to have built-in motion controls.

Nonetheless, PS3 captured the imagination, stealing a march on the



When Killzone 2 finally arrived it did look mighty fine, but it wasn't close to that pre-rendered trailer...

Xbox 360 in several vital areas. The prototype promised full backwards compatibility with all PS1 and PS2 games, had an HDMI port as standard, and would be the first console to use Blu-ray discs – an emerging format with a capacity far greater than the 360's standard-issue DVD discs.

Elsewhere in 2005, PlayStation Portable arrived on western shores,

first in North America (March) and fashionably late in Europe (September). The European launch line-up was impossibly strong, containing titles such as Ridge Racer, Lumines and Wipeout Pure. PSP would go on to have mixed fortunes, but the concept of a PS2-in-your-hands was an instant hit at launch, with a respectable 185,000 units shifted in the UK in the first week alone.

As for PS2-but-not-in-your-hands, 2005 was a surprisingly quiet year for Sony's stalwart system, punctuated with brief moments of glorious, glorious violence – such as Kratos' blood-drenched debut in the original God Of War, and a pleasingly faithful port of GameCube's best game, Resident Evil 4.



THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 Resident Evil 4

On his grand return to Resi, director Shinji Mikami threw out pretty much everything about it: the perspective, the horror focus and even the zombies. The result is one of the finest action games ever made, with no end of memorable set-pieces.

PUB CAPCOM DEV CAPCOM



2 Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

Snake Eater (sort of) took Snake back in time, stripping the player of creature comforts and asking them to eat wildlife to survive. Some of Kojima's best work is here, including the tense sniper battle with The End.

PUB KONAMI DEV KONAMI



3 Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening

Knowing it dropped the ball with DMC2, Capcom had something to prove with Dante's Awakening. It deepened the combat with a platter of new weapons and fighting styles, resulting in the best game in the series.

PUB CAPCOM DEV CAPCOM



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"DESPITE A QUIET YEAR FOR PS2,
THE STALWART BOX ADDED GOD OF
WAR AND RESI 4 TO ITS ROSTER."

We were fully prepared
to fling that boomerang
controller out the door –
but thought better of it.



PLAYSTATION 3 DELAYS, RIIIIIDGE RACER, GIANT ENEMY CRABS & GUITAR HERO

PlayStation 3 finally arrived – but later and dearer than anyone was expecting. On 15 March, Ken Kutaragi confirmed what had long been suspected: that PS3 had slipped from May to November.

Problems with the Blu-ray disc copy protection were blamed for the delay. And poor old Blu-ray was dragged over the coals yet again in September when the European date was pushed back into March 2007 – this time due to a shortage of blue laser diodes.

Still, that was just all the more time for us to save up for one. On the eve of E3 2006, Sony announced that PS3 would come with a price tag to match its technical heft – \$499 (around £340) for the 20GB model, and an eye-watering \$599 (£410) for the premium 60GB edition. The UK price

was later set at a princely £425. Cue Kevin Spacey, “Wrong!” meme.

Rocking up to the party late and sporting a price tag that would make Paris Hilton blush, the critics’ knives were out for PS3 at E3 2006. Every aspect of Sony’s presentation was aggressively mocked by internet onlookers – from Kaz Hirai’s excited announcement of ‘RIIIIIIDGE RACER!’ to the proclamation that PS3 exclusive Genji: Days Of The Blade would be based on actual Japanese history – moments before we saw the hero battle a giant crab. At least the new



LocoRoco, one of the oddest titles to hit Sony’s first handheld, tasked you with collecting multicoloured, cartoonish beasts.

“THE UK PRICE FOR PLAYSTATION 3 WAS FINALLY SET AT £425.”

Sixaxis pad jettisoned the banana-shape for a more traditional design, and added motion controls to boot.

Still! PlayStation 3 did finally find its ways into shops this year – launching in Japan on 11 November and the US a week later on 17 November. The launch line-up was weak, spearheaded by Resistance: Fall Of Man and, um, not a lot else of note. But PlayStation 2 and PSP were kept well-fed at least. Guitar Hero blazed onto PAL PS2 consoles in April, following its surprise success in the US the previous year, while PSP owners were treated to original oddities such as LocoRoco (still the happiest game we’ve ever played). It was a reminder that, despite the internet bile, Sony had much to smile about as they prepared for a big 2007.



THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



Shadow Of The Colossus

At a time when others were thinking of ways to cram more into games, Fumito Ueda wanted *less*. Each of the soaring, emotive boss fights is bookended by a lonely trek, giving you time to think about what you’ve done.

PUB SONY DEV TEAM ICO



Hitman: Blood Money

Let’s forget Absolution and remember the brilliant Blood Money, a sandbox murder sim with an unparalleled amount of player choice. You can off your targets in a variety of ways, using disguises, elaborate accidents and plain old violence as you see fit.

PUB EIDOS DEV IO INTERACTIVE



Kingdom Hearts II

Once again melding the worlds of Final Fantasy and Disney, KH II was exactly what we all wanted – the same third-person brawling and platforming tweaked to perfection. New features such as Drive Forms made the team-based combat extra rewarding.

PUB SQUARE ENIX DEV SQUARE ENIX



PS3 LAUNCHES, BURNOUT PARADISE, UNCHARTED & HARDWARE REVISIONS

PlayStation 3 launched in Europe on 23 March, but it wasn't just the system's tardiness that courted controversy. The chrome-less 20GB budget model failed to materialise in the UK, and the 60GB model we *did* get ditched the full PS2 backwards compatibility featured in US/Japan units.

Instead of basically building a PS2 inside each console, Sony packaged in a software emulator. Nevertheless Europe was, as is now, a Sony stronghold, and PS3 had an exceptional launch, selling 600,000 machines across the continent in the first two days. In the UK, only PSP had enjoyed a better opening salvo.

With PS3 finally firing on all cylinders, everyone's focus returned to the games. Reaction to the first wave of third-party titles was mixed,

"PS3 HAD AN EXCEPTIONAL LAUNCH WEEK, SELLING OVER 600,000 UNITS IN TWO DAYS."



Even now, all these years later, Uncharted remains one of the best-looking games on PS3.

however. Thanks to agreements in place between Sony and third-party publishers, all titles released first on Xbox 360 would come with extra content on PS3 to compensate – but the complexity of PS3's Cell architecture meant that it would take a year or two for parity between the two consoles to be established. 2008's

Burnout Paradise would become the first multi-format game to run best on PS3.

The antidote was something that would rapidly nudge PS3 back into contention – a stellar line-up of exclusives built around PS3's strengths. And of Sony's fleet of first and second-party developers, none proved more valuable than Naughty Dog, whose first PS3 effort, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, wowed fans upon release in November.

Still, Sony wasn't finished with its hardware tinkering. The original models were phased out in favour of a 40GB and 80GB models, which binned PS2 support entirely. On the plus side, it meant price drops for the old stock. PSP also saw its first hardware revision – PSP-2000, or PSP Slim & Lite. Released in September, it was lighter and brighter than the original, and remains the definitive PSP model. And at the Tokyo Game Show, we saw a 'shocking' return. Over to you, 2008...

023

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES

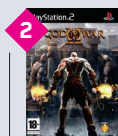


1 Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

We were all thoroughly sick of World War 2 games by '07, so Modern Warfare was a breath of fresh air.

It remains one of the best CODs, with an ace story and multiplayer that introduced the now-ubiquitous levelling system.

PUB ACTIVISION DEV INFINITY WARD



2 God Of War II

GOW ended with Kratos becoming the new God Of War (spoiler!) – so where the hell do you go from there? Well, to Hell, actually (well,

technically the Underworld). Adding even more complexity to its deep combat system, GOW II was a last hurrah for PS2.

PUB SONY DEV SCE SANTA MONICA



3 Okami

A Japanese fable in videogame form, Okami followed the plight of Amaterasu, a god trying to save the world from an ancient evil. This was easier said than done, given that Ammy took the form of an oh-so cuddly, Daz-white wolf.

PUB CAPCOM DEV CLOVER STUDIOS



DUALSHOCK 3, TROPHIES, METAL GEAR SOLID 4 & LITTLEBIGPLANET

This was the year Sony got its buzz back — and we're not just talking about the cracking line-up of games released during 2008 (more on those later). Nope, we're talking about a buzz of a more literal kind — the gentle hum of a controller that's warning you that your sports car is veering off into the weeds, or that someone is pumping an entire rifle clip into your sorry little face.

We're talking 'haptic feedback', or, in English, vibrating controllers, and the



Over-indulgent two-hour cutscenes aside, MGS4 remains one of PlayStation's most engaging and memorable experiences.

"FIRMWARE UPDATE 2.40 DELIVERED IN-GAME XMB SUPPORT AND INTRODUCED THE TROPHY SYSTEM."

news that Sony had resolved its patent infringement dispute with the Google-owned Immersion Corporation in March 2007 paved the way for the tech to debut on PS3. And so in July, the Sixaxis' replacement arrived in the form of DualShock 3 — essentially the same controller, but with the famous vibration motors restored. Rumble support



was retrospectively patched in to older PS3 titles such as MotorStorm, suggesting Sony was always confident the issue would work itself out.

PATCH ADAMS

Speaking of patches, it turned out that PlayStation 3 hardware could be updated just as easily as its software, and we got our first significant glimpse of how exciting an evolving platform could be

when Firmware update 2.40 delivered in-game XMB support, and Trophies — Sony's answer to Xbox 360's in-vogue, dangerously life-sucking Achievements system.

PSP also evolved this year, although some might contend not necessarily for the better. At Gamescom 2008, Sony unveiled the third PSP in four years — the PSP-3000. A minor upgrade over the PSP-2000, it came with a built-in microphone for online gaming or Skype, and a brighter LCD screen. It also had a faster refresh rate to counteract the PSP-2000's ghosting issues, but the trade-off came in the form of visible scanlines and jaggy graphics, which had some scurrying back to their PSP-2000s.

Anything else? Oh yes, the games! So. Many. Great. Games. PS3 enjoyed a break-out year in 2008, with Resistance 2, Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots and LittleBigPlanet headlining a killer list of PS3 exclusives. Meanwhile, PSP's highlights hinted at the direction portable gaming was going to take — away from scaled-down adaptations of full console games and towards quirkier offerings such as Patapon and Super Stardust Portable.

THE YEAR'S TOP SIX GAMES



1 Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots

Love it or hate it, this is Kojima at his most Kojima. The cutscenes might last forever, but how else to (chronologically) wrap up this beautifully mad series than with twist after twist after twist? What a ride.

PUB KONAMI DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS



2 Dead Space

The sequels are less scary and more action-heavy, but the original remains a great sci-horror with echoes of Resident Evil 4. It's a wonderfully immersive game; holomenus and cavernous sound design firmly trapping you inside its sci-fi hell.

PUB EA DEV EA REDWOOD SHORES



3 Bioshock

This spiritual sequel to System Shock proved that first-person shooters can be intelligent, too. The game's a comment on player agency, a deconstruction of Objectivism, but also a solid shooter with a soggy setting and captivating narrative.

PUB TAKE-TWO DEV 2K/DIGITAL EXTREMES



4 Rock Band

After Guitar Hero revolutionised air guitar, Harmonix decided to simulate an entire band. To unleash the full potential of this incredible party game, you needed four pricey instruments and three moderately tipsy friends. Rock on!

PUB EA DEV HARMONIX



5 LittleBigPlanet

LittleBigPlanet's creation tools are some of the best, and simplest, the industry has ever seen. You lot made some hugely creative, complex and hilarious stages with it, and then you did it all again for the next two full-fat instalments.

PUB SONY DEV MEDIA MOLECULE



6 Fallout 3

Many prefer its follow-up New Vegas, which better captured the dark wit of the original games, but Bethesda's open-world apocalypse is a rambler's dream. It rewarded exploration while offering a combat system with a turn-based twist.

PUB BETHESDA DEV BETHESDA





PLAYSTATION MOVE, PSP GO & PS3 SLIM

This year saw PlayStation 3 outsell Xbox 360 for the first time – raking in an impressive 13 million sales worldwide compared to 360's 10.1 million. By this point in the game, however, it was clear that Sony and Microsoft were squabbling over the generation's leftovers.

Despite its lack of grunt (it was barely more powerful than PS2), Nintendo's Wii console had established a commanding lead over the competition, shifting over 21 million units in 2009 alone. While traditional gaming audiences shunned Wii, the diminutive console with the glowing blue mouth opened up our hobby to new demographics, thanks to its innovative motion controller, which made everything from playing tennis

**"THE WORLD WASN'T
READY FOR PSP GO'S
DOWNLOAD-ONLY
FORMAT, OR ITS PRICE."**

to slicing skulls easy for any member of the family (even the little ones).

Sony fancied a bit of that mainstream success. And so, as widely speculated, the hardware giant revealed its own motion controller for

PS3, PlayStation Move, at E3 2009. Move's eventual fate is a story for another year, so let us just say this for now: Move was, and is, a seriously impressive piece of technology.

HARDWARE TIMES

Rather than being a slapdash answer to the Wii motion controller, Move had actually been in development since 2000, and was, from a technological standpoint, light-years ahead of Wii's version. Move's most prominent physical feature was a positively indecent looking glowing orb situated on the controller's tip, which could be tracked by the PlayStation Eye camera, allowing for three-dimensional motion controls. Additionally, the Eye would scan the colours in the room the system was located in and transmit this data to your Move controller, enabling it to select an orb colour that wouldn't clash with your curtains. Fashionable!

Also fashionable in 2009: portable gaming. Just before E3, Sony announced its most dramatic PSP redesign yet – PSP Go. Released in October, it ditched the clunky UMD format in favour of 16GB of internal memory. It was a cool bit of kit, but the world wasn't ready for download-only, nor was it ready for its £225 price tag. A new slimline PS3 with a fresh logo was revealed at Gamescom, and was far more warmly received...

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Drake's second outing was more assured, more ambitious, and somehow even more beautiful than his first. It gave us standout moments (oh, that dangling train opener), and remains the peak of this excellent series.

PUB SONY DEV NAUGHTY DOG



2 Batman: Arkham Asylum

This licensed game from an unproven studio shouldn't have been good – but it was exceptional.

With a deep love and understanding for the Caped Crusader, Rocksteady crafted one of the best combat systems ever.

PUB SQUARE ENIX DEV ROCKSTEADY



3 ASSASSIN'S CREED II

The original had a great foundation, but it had its limitations. This epic sequel expanded its systems and smoothed its rough edges, all while introducing a beautiful new setting and the best protagonist the series has ever known.

PUB UBISOFT DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL



PLAYSTATION MOVE LAUNCHES, 3D GAMING & PLAYSTATION PLUS

New decade, new ways to play; that was the theme of 2010. Much of Sony's attention this year focused on PlayStation Move, its September launch being treated with all the pomp and pageantry of a brand new hardware launch.

But despite a high-profile link-up with Coca-Cola and a prominent push at E3 2010 (Sony even went as far as to wheel freshly-disgraced star Tiger Woods out on stage for a round of pretend-golf), Move was lumbered with a historically uninspired launch line-up, consisting of nonentities such as Sports Champions, Kung Fu Rider and Start The Party! (Their exclamation mark, not ours.)

Sales in Europe were steady enough (1.5 million units shifted in the first month alone), but publishers were loath to finance games for a peripheral owned by a small splinter of the PS3 market, and so the killer app for PlayStation Move never came. The controller slowly spiralled into obscurity over the course of the next few years, but Sony worldwide president Shuhei Yoshida recently revealed that motion controls



Drawing from its experiences with EyeToy on PlayStation 2, Sony had high hopes for PlayStation Move...

would become relevant again when Sony's Project Morpheus virtual reality headset hits the market in 2016.

3D gaming was another hotly-tipped vision of the future. At E3, Sony proudly showed off a 3D demo of Killzone 3, a game which had been



Sony's attempts to kickstart the movement by offering a cut-price Bravia 3DTV with four free games, the buzz soon fizzled out.

It's funny to think that of all the Sony announcements at a busy E3 2010, the one that ended up offering

"THE ANNOUNCEMENT WITH THE MOST LASTING IMPACT WAS ALSO THE MOST UNHERALDED – PLAYSTATION PLUS."



"built from the ground up," with 3D viewing in mind. Considering we were just six months removed from the cinematic release of 3D posterchild Avatar, it's no surprise that the mind-blowing demonstration captured imaginations at the show. Alas, 3D gaming proved to be a fad, and despite

the most lasting impact was also one of the most unheralded – the launch of the PlayStation Plus service. A premium subscription service that offered a rotating buffet of free games and store discounts to its members, it was largely scoffed at when it was launched in June, but quickly established itself as an essential purchase for PlayStation owners.

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



Red Dead Redemption

This could have just been GTA: Wild West and it would have done the business, but instead it's a subtler story about the decline of the Old West, and how it's not always so easy to escape your past. An instant classic.

PUB ROCKSTAR GAMES DEV ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO



Super Street Fighter IV

Building on the rousing success of 2008's SFIV, the rejigged update was more than just an increase in the roster. A series of tweaks based on fan feedback rebalanced the fighting, as did some welcome extra online modes.

PUB CAPCOM DEV CAPCOM/DIMPS



Heavy Rain

David Cage continues to fly the flag for interactive, *bankers* cinematic stories, and the world would be a far duller place without him. Heavy Rain was a collection of thrilling and engaging moments that introduced the world to "JASON!"

PUB SONY DEV QUANTIC DREAM



THREEQUELS, PSN DOWNTIME & PS VITA REVEALED

By now, PlayStation 3's list of exclusives was beginning to look far more compelling than that of rival Xbox 360 – Uncharted 3, Killzone 3 and Resistance 3 all proving that good things come in (or are suffixed by) threes. But any hopes Sony had of a quiet year where the games did the talking came crashing to a halt on 20 April, when someone pulled the plug on the PlayStation Network, making it downright impossible for PS3 and PSP owners to get online for over three weeks. It hurt.

That 'someone' turned out to be hackers, who exploited a security flaw in the PSN infrastructure (potentially compromising personal information from over 77 million PSN accounts in the process) and forced Sony to lock down its systems until they were fixed.

Although it was never comprehensively confirmed who was behind the attacks, Sony strongly suspected the hacking group Anonymous, who had recently been behind a series of attacks on Sony websites, in retaliation to a legal



Sure, there were lots of sequels going about, but that didn't mean a drop in quality. Uncharted 3 was *incredible*.



dispute between Sony and a hacker who jailbroke PS3.

Anonymous, however, denied involvement, claiming that attacking PSN would needlessly punish innocent PlayStation gamers. Regardless of who was to blame for the hack, the entire episode was an expensive and embarrassing one for Sony, and may have even indirectly led to the demise of Zipper Interactive, whose online-reliant SOCOM 4 was released the same day the outage began.

Sony, to its credit, handled the situation remarkably well in the aftermath, offering a suitably contrite apology at E3 2011. Affected users received 30 days of PlayStation Plus access and a stack of free games as compensation.

With that ugliness behind it, Sony could focus on showcasing Next-Gen Portable (NGP). Announced in January and later renamed and revealed as PlayStation Vita, it was a sleek machine that superficially resembled PSP but featured a raft of subtle design fixes. Gone was PSP's coarse,

"SONY, TO ITS CREDIT, HANDLED THE PSN DOWNTIME WELL WITH LOTS OF FREE GAMES."

fingerprint-destroying 'nub', in favour of more conventional twin analogue sticks. And as for popular touchscreens? Vita gave us that, and then threw in a snazzy rear touchpad too, just because it could. It launched in Japan in December 2011. But it's over to 2012 for us Europeans.

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1

Mass Effect 2

The first of the series to hit PS3 toned down the numbers, improved the combat and focused more on story. It was an essential PS3 buy, despite the missing first chapter. Where's Skyrim, you ask? Blame Bethesda's shameful launch bugs...

PUB EA DEV BIOWARE



2

Dark Souls

FromSoft's spiritual sequel to Demon's Souls is a modern-day classic, with unwavering attention to detail in its world design, and some of the best combat an RPG has ever seen. Conquering Dark Souls is a challenge, and one you won't forget.

PUB NAMCO BANDAI DEV FROM SOFTWARE



3

Portal 2

Portal 2 was everything we could hope for from a sequel. The puzzling was expanded in clever ways, while its story was bigger and funnier thanks to a laugh-out-loud script and winning voice-acting from the likes of Stephen Merchant.

PUB EA DEV VALVE



PLAYSTATION VITA RELEASED & PS3 NEARING RETIREMENT

PlayStation Vita (“it’s Latin for life,” every news outlet reminded us at the time) officially launched in the United Kingdom on 22 February, in what could charitably be described a veritable baptism of fire.

The hardware itself met with rave reviews, and the line-up of games was undeniably strong — 30+ games were available at launch, including *Uncharted: Golden Abyss*, *WipEout 2048*, *Rayman Origins* and *Lumines: Electronic Symphony*. These titles threw weight behind Vita’s boast that it was capable of packing PS3-calibre games into a piece of curvy hardware the size of a cow’s tongue, but there was trouble in paradise.

Circumstances were conspiring against PS Vita, which launched at the very height of the iOS gaming craze — the public had warmed to the idea of paying 59p for portable games and Vita’s premium priced titles looked heavy on the wallet in comparison. It didn’t help that the initial monsoon of titles quickly dried up and the rest of 2012 saw a software drought, while the price of the system itself was steep

— £229 for the base model and £279 for the 3G-enabled version, plus the price of a small mortgage for the memory cards to add on top of that outlay.

Combined, these factors saw punters approach PS Vita with caution, and launch sales in the UK stood at a

disappointing 45k — well down from PSP’s 185k.

Vita would go on to find relevance by moving away from boxed premium titles and embracing digital downloads, but that’s a story for later on down the road.

Like dogs trembling before earthquakes strike, new handhelds are usually a sign that a new wave of consoles are on the horizon — and the announcement of a *LittleBigPlanet Karting* game only furthered speculation that PS3 was nearing the end of its life. Sony began PS3’s winding down process in September by announcing a new budget ‘Super Slim’ model, which took the console under the £200 mark for the first time in its history. It wasn’t as universally popular as the 2009 revision however; the top-loading disc tray no match for the old slot.



While PS Vita would struggle against the mobile gaming market, it would eventually get a second breath of life thanks to some bespoke titles (such as *Tearaway*) and a PS Plus library stuffed with its biggest hits.

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 **Journey**
We’ve played with thousands of other people online, but rarely have we felt this much of a connection with another soul. Journey made players anonymous, transforming everyone into iconic scarf-people on a charming adventure.

PUB SONY DEV THATGAMECOMPANY



2 **Dishonored**
Arkane Studios built on its experience with first-person melee combat and nailed the formula to the wall with the steampunk-themed *Dishonored*. It’s a game of stealth and murder, mixing *Hitman*, *Deus Ex* and *Thief*. An utterly brilliant experience.

PUB BETHESDA DEV ARKANE STUDIOS



3 **The Walking Dead**
Has it really only been three years since Telltale revitalised adventure games with TWD? You can hardly accuse it of resting on its laurels since. This narratively rich series boldly downplayed puzzles and exploration for story and choice.

PUB TELLTALE GAMES DEV TELLTALE GAMES



PLAYSTATION 4 LAUNCHES, SHARING & RECORD BREAKING SALES

Although PlayStation 3 rebounded from its poor start, it was never able to establish market dominance like PS1 and PS2 did back in the day. PlayStation 4 on the other hand established itself as boss before we even knew what it looked like.

Doubly impressive, when you consider we first thing we saw running on the thing was Knack. Ropey platformers aside, PS4's announcement event in New York on 20 February was clean, clear and hinted at the ways PS4 would enhance our gaming experiences beyond increasing the grunt power. Its improved interface would enable players to upload gameplay footage,



Following months of palpable hype, PS4 broke retail records and became a must-have item that Christmas.



truth be told, it was Microsoft's insistence of scoring own goal after own goal that saw Sony storm into a commanding lead before the gen could even begin. The US giant hoped to build on the inroads Xbox 360 has

indie scene, to the price itself, inflated by the mandatory Kinect add-on.

Smelling blood, Sony went straight for the throat at its E3 presentation, devastating its waning opponents with takedown after takedown. "You can trade in your games at a store," Sony president Jack Tretton announced. "No online check-in requirement here," he said. "Oh, by the way, have you seen our burgeoning indie scene?" PlayStation 4 even *looked* better than its opposition, its sleek, slanted shape making it look like art compared with the VCR-like Xbox One.

Tretton would go on to declare PS4 a great redemption story, and its success was instant. The system went on sale on 29 November in the UK and shifted an astonishing 250,000 units in just 48 hours – more than PSP or PS3 could manage. Xbox One, meanwhile, plodded along with a paltry 150,000 to its name.

"LAUNCHING ON 29 NOVEMBER 2013, PS4 SHIFTED AN ASTONISHING 250,000 UNITS IN JUST 48 HOURS."

play games while updates installed themselves in the background, and suspend playing sessions for later – all innovations that made PS3's XMB interface look really dated.

PS4's Feb announcement was crisp and professional but,



made in the market, but instead squandered a decade's hard work with a selection box of consumer-hostile decisions – from the requirement for the console to always be online, to an inability to trade in used games, to the lack of an

THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1 The Last Of Us

Naughty Dog followed up its relatively lighthearted Uncharted series with this bleak action game set after the apocalypse. It's a subtler game, but one with its own share of blockbusting moments and a story that lands an emotional gut-punch.

PUB SONY DEV NAUGHTY DOG



2 Grand Theft Auto V

The fifth numbered GTA brought back some of the silliness lacking from GTA IV in a crime caper featuring no fewer than three main characters. The game's huge open-world can be played online, too – a mode filled with co-op races and heists.

PUB ROCKSTAR GAMES DEV ROCKSTAR NORTH



3 Bioshock Infinite

Its development was troubled, but the end result is another sumptuous FPS set in a fantastical alternate world. Or *worlds*, we should say – Infinite's story is mindbendingly brilliant, shunting you from one magical universe to the next.

PUB 2K GAMES DEV IRRATIONAL GAMES



031

"SMELLING BLOOD, SONY WENT
STRAIGHT FOR THE THROAT DURING
ITS E3 PRESENTATION IN 2013."

PS4 is all about change -
including a much-needed
update to the classic
DualShock design.



PS VITA GOES INDIE, REMOTE PLAY & PROJECT MORPHEUS

Woah – we got so completely caught up in PS4's launch, that we completely forgot to talk about PS Vita's 2013! To quickly recap: after the disappointing news in February that the PS Vita's sales figures were well below Sony's forecast of ten million, many industry insiders were quick to declare Vita dead in the water.

Sony had other plans however, and began Project re-Vitalisation by slashing the console's price and shifting development focus away from big-budget triple-A games and towards its thriving indie scene. PS Vita was also able to piggy-back on PS4's success thanks to the Remote Play feature, which enabled PS4 owners to stream their current-gen games to their Vita, allowing you to play games such as *Destiny* away from your TV.

As part of the refresh, Sony announced a slimmer and lighter Vita model in January 2014. Released in the UK on 7 February, PS Vita Slim boasted a trim price tag to match its form factor – it cost £180, which represented even better value for money once you factored in its 1GB of internal memory. It also

had a slightly better battery life, although this came at a cost – PS Vita Slim's LED display was slightly dimmer than PS Vita Fatboy's OLED screen. Having said that, both consoles boast ridiculously bright displays, so we're hardly talking massive levels of sacrifice here.

MIGHTY MORPHEUS

The year 2014 also saw Sony unveil arguably its most ambitious hardware yet – Project Morpheus. The virtual reality headset was revealed at GDC and immediately grabbed your (and our) attention with its immersive potential and PS4 compatibility, plus promised a new lease of life for PS Move wands the world over.

If you fancied playing your PS4 games in bed, but wanted to play on the big screen, meanwhile, then 2014 had your back. The PS TV microconsole, released in November, enabled you to stream games onto a second TV screen while your PS4 whirrs away downstairs. And to close off a year in which PS4 continued to dominate? Sony celebrated with the first ever annual PlayStation Experience event for its fans, hosted in Las Vegas.



THE YEAR'S TOP THREE GAMES



1

Destiny

Its story of moon-wizards and spinmetal might be tough to follow, but no one can fault the quality of Bungie's gunplay. Satisfying shooting meets compelling loot-gathering and daunting online challenges; we've been stuck in its feedback loop ever since.

PUB ACTIVISION DEV BUNGIE



2

Alien: Isolation

An old-fashioned horror that prioritises hiding and punishes mistakes, *Isolation* is a beautiful anachronism. It's also the most authentic Alien game ever made, recreating the look of the film in exquisite detail. In space, no one can hear you sob in a cupboard.

PUB SEGA DEV CREATIVE ASSEMBLY



3

Dragon Age: Inquisition

A rushed development period and cramped urban location hobbled *Dragon Age 2*, so for this sequel

BioWare blew us away. It's an enormous RPG that gives you control over a small army, harking back to the original story.

PUB EA DEV BIOWARE



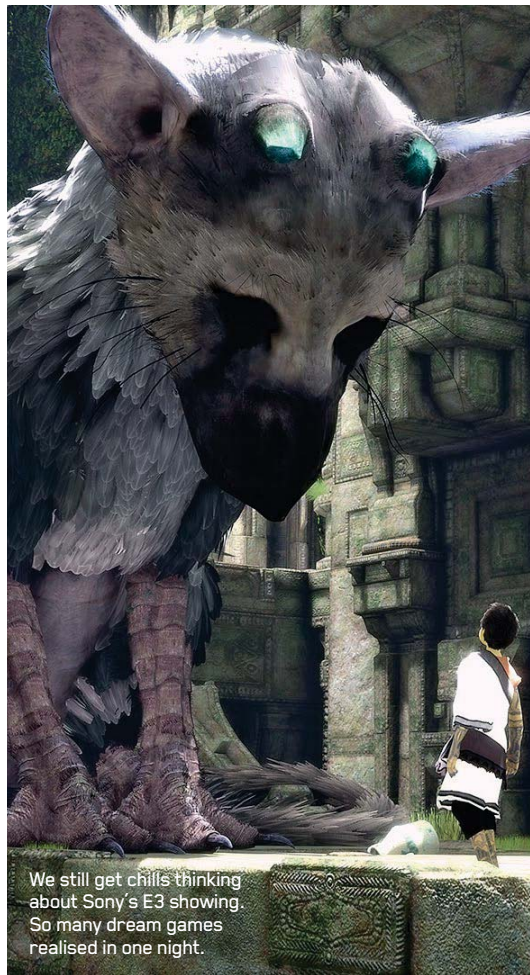
THE LAST GUARDIAN, SHENMUE 3, NEW COD PARTNERSHIP & FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE

On PlayStation's 20th anniversary, Sony stoked the flames and reignited the fires hot off an historic E3 victory. *The Last Guardian's* shock return from eight years in development limbo is one of those headline-grabbing announcements you still can't quite believe.

Almost a decade in absentia, it was feared Team Ico's successor to stone cold PS2 classics *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus* was gone forever, but its return signals intent to continue delivering unique experiences.

And that's not all. The *Shenmue* series spent even longer out of the spotlight (14 years), but the long, long-awaited third instalment is back. A *Final Fantasy VII* remaster rounds off the triple threat of E3 surprises. Fans have spent years begging for them, and that they're actually happening indicates 2015 is the year

"THE LIKES OF UNTIL DAWN AND THE ORDER: 1886 SHOW SONY IS WILLING TO PUSH NEW BRANDS."



Sony stood firmly behind its PS4 slogan: This Is For The Players.

And the current releases? *Bloodborne* is an undoubted critical and commercial success, the revitalised incarnation of an all-time great in *Dark Souls*, and the likes of *Until Dawn* and *The Order: 1886* show Sony's willing to throw weight behind new properties. And let's not forget a thriving indie scene featuring *Rocket League*, *N++* and *Titan Souls*.

THE FUTURE'S GREY

2015 is also the year Sony took it to Microsoft. With the news *Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare* sold 4.01 million copies on PS4 and only 2.61 million on Xbox One, it seized the chance to snatch up timed-exclusive DLC for the series. Alongside that, *Destiny* has continued to boast PS4-exclusive maps, Strikes, and gear. Fact: two of the biggest games in the world right now are best on PS4.

Sony's platform is stronger than ever, and sales figures back that up. As of March, PS4 has sold 22.3 million units, with a further 16 million expected before the year is out. Key strategies, such as a thriving PlayStation Plus service that dishes out excellent free games on a monthly basis, further defines the console. The year isn't yet over, but it isn't too early to declare it a massive success for PlayStation 4.

2015'S TOP GAMES (SO FAR)



Bloodborne

From Software invigorates the *Dark Souls* formula with a transfusion of aggressive new enemies, brutal transforming weaponry and even bloodier combat in a rich and captivating dark world. Hidetaka Miyazaki crafts another punishing masterpiece.

PUB SONY DEV FROM SOFTWARE



Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain

The final hurrah for the celebrated series under the banner of Hideo Kojima, the split between developer and publisher dominated pre-release talk but the sublime sandbox stealth action means Koj has bowed out on a high.

PUB KONAMI DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS



The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt

Simply pulling off an open-world as massive as the Northern Realms would not be blowing up your PS4 is a feat in itself, but filling it with engaging quests and stories is truly impressive. The White Wolf rides off in style.

PUB BANDAI NAMCO DEV CD PROJEKT RED



PROJECT MORPHEUS, UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END, HORIZON ZERO DAWN & STREET FIGHTER V

Virtual reality will find its de facto home on PS4 with Project Morpheus, the best way to experience a new gaming revolution. Sony's headset, exclusive to PS4, is the most immersive, most comfortable, and not to mention most aesthetically badass in a soon-to-be crowded market. Key selling points include a lovely 120Hz refresh rate and the ability to output another game feed to a TV for others to play along, too.

Of course, exciting new tech is nothing without titles, and Morpheus has over 30 in development. CCP Games' EVE: Valkyrie is a thrilling space-based dogfighter set in the sprawling universe of its massive PC



Both EVE: Valkyrie (above left) and The London Heist (above right) show Morpheus is more than a passing fad.

controlled by mates who can fight back with projectiles. Then there's bank shooter The London Heist, undersea exploration The Deep, and bomb-defusing multiplayer puzzler Keep Talking And Nobody Explodes.

designing for it, and it bodes well for the headset's long-term future.

But Sony isn't forgetting about more traditional experiences, and it's proving it with a batch of irresistible exclusives. It continues a winning partnership with Naughty Dog in Uncharted 4 (check this month's cover feature for more), forges ahead with fresh concepts in Guerrilla's Horizon Zero Dawn, and pulls off a major coup in grabbing a genre-conquering phenomenon in Street Fighter V.

2016, then, will be a year of innovation. With Morpheus bringing a new wave of interactive entertainment — and offering new ways to play old games — as more system-selling exclusives roll in from the greatest developers on the planet, next year is shaping up to be PlayStation's best. ■

"KEY MORPHEUS SELLING POINTS INCLUDE A 120HZ REFRESH RATE AND SINGLE TV PROJECTION."

MMO, EVE Online. Here players strap into spacecraft cockpits and battle among space fleets and asteroid fields from first-person.

Playroom VR is more proof of concept: a unique multiplayer mini-game compilation that shows off what Morpheus can do. There's one in which the wearer becomes a dinosaur, headbutting little robots

Alongside new experiences are a slew of retrofitted ones. Project CARS, Thief and Surgeon Simulator shine in the new medium of virtual reality, with dozens more taking on a new lease of life. It's good to see both established studios and indie upstarts feel confident enough about virtual reality to throw themselves into



SIX GAMES TO WATCH IN 2016



Uncharted 4: A Thief's End

An older, wiser, but no less wisecracking Nathan Drake stars in Naughty Dog's eagerly awaited new

adventure, alongside a Troy Baker-voiced brother. Expect gobsmacking set-pieces and thigh-slapping zingers.

PUB SONY DEV NAUGHTY DOG



The Last Guardian

No, we can't quite believe it either, but The Last Guardian is real, and it's happening. It's everything we'd hoped for: a touching tale of a boy exploring ruins with his giant eagle-dog. With Fumito Ueda on board and Sony's backing, this could be epic.

PUB SONY DEV GENDESIGN/SCE STUDIO JAPAN



Horizon Zero Dawn

1,000 years in the future, robotic dinosaurs rule the land. In this beautiful open-world you can hunt them with explosive arrows, anchor them using cables, pillage them for parts, or run away screaming. Dino hunting has never looked so good.

PUB SONY DEV GUERRILLA GAMES



Unlike other VR headsets in the works, Morpheus also looks great and is comfortable to use.

035

"THANKS TO
PROJECT MORPHEUS
AND CO, 2016 WILL
BE THE YEAR OF
INNOVATION."



**Deus Ex:
Mankind Divided**

Unlike Human Revolution, you can play this more open sci-fi RPG as a true pacifist, non-lethally taking down bosses and knocking fools out clean. That new spike-launcher does look pretty appealing though...

PUB SQUARE ENIX DEV EIDOS MONTREAL



Street Fighter V

New to this genre-defining beat-'em-up is the ability to stun opponents who play too aggressively, a V-Gauge which fills to enable more attacks, and interactive stages. Oh, and consider this one: it's a PlayStation 4 console-exclusive. *Forever.*

PUB CAPCOM DEV CAPCOM



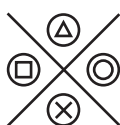
Mass Effect Andromeda

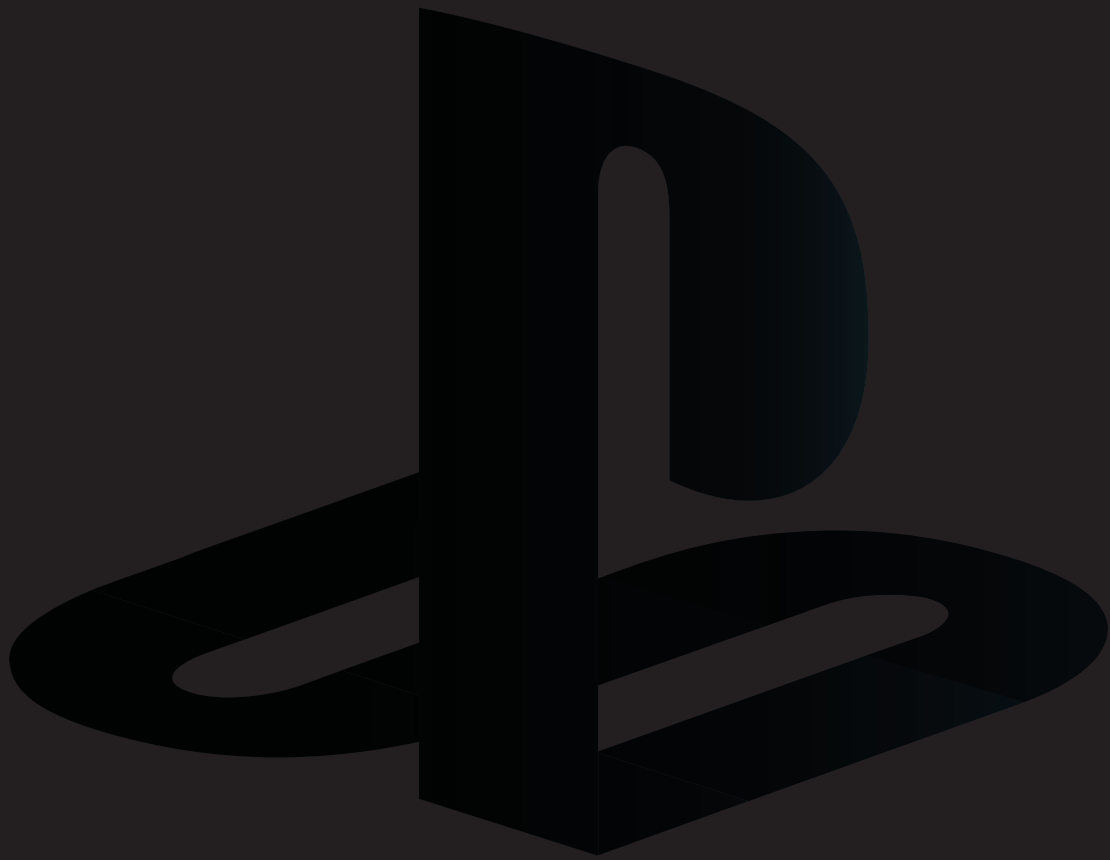
Bioware boldly rediscovers Mass Effect's fun streak after a dark and brooding final instalment. Andromeda kickstarts a new saga with fresh characters to mingle with and more scope to roam farther than ever.

PUB EA DEV BOWARE

The Secrets Of PlayStation

What does it take to make PlayStation a dynasty? We cornered some of the world's biggest developers and asked them to share the secrets of their craft...







MARK CERNY
PS4 SYSTEM ARCHITECT

What's the secret to building the greatest console in history?

What we tried to do with PS Vita was make sure that... oh, you mean PlayStation 4?

I know it sounds extremely basic but we made a great attempt to hear – directly from the game creators – what sort of console would really help them to create the games they were dreaming of making. I once said I'd talked to a few dozen teams. It turns out that was incorrect – I found my notes recently and the number was closer to fifty!

What they said was very surprising, at least to me. I'd expected to hear a lot about performance, and I did – but

what I [also] heard was, "Do not use exotic technologies as a way to increase the performance."

The developers were looking for something conventional in many ways, with good performance, and good growth potential.

Certainly the choice of an x86 CPU and a PC GPU satisfied the need for familiarity and performance, but good growth potential... that was very tricky. We ended up modifying the GPU in a number of ways, principally to make 'compute' (also known as 'GPGPU') easier and more practical – by which I mean using the GPU to perform something other than traditional rendering

tasks. Our vision was that Day One titles might not make use of compute, but that by year three or four we'd see a lot of very interesting work in this area.

This overall strategy, of a familiar hardware with some forward looking features, seems to have turned out very well. The familiarity has brought us a rich library of titles, and the benefits of 'compute' are already being seen – Resogun made great use of it at launch, and most recently The Tomorrow Children uses 'compute' for its soft lighting and overall surreal look.

I can't wait to see what the future will bring here.



20TH ANNIVERSARY 

039

PS4's designer also
created PS1 icons
Crash Bandicoot and
Spyro The Dragon.



PATRICK BACH
DICE GENERAL MANAGER

What's the secret to making the perfect Star Wars game?

That's a good question. This is exactly what we're basing the Star Wars Battlefront project on. What's the secret? What is it that we want to achieve?

The brilliant thing when the relationship started with Lucasfilm was that they said to us, "We want to build the best Battlefront game that has ever been made, and the best Star Wars game that has ever been made. We know you know how to build shooters — how can we get this to work?" And we said, "We want the same thing, so what can we get from you? Open the doors."

If you want to recreate the battles from the original trilogy, and you get access to the actual content that those battles were built upon — the blasters, the

AT-AT walkers, the Stormtrooper armour, everything — the authenticity of the game will be super-high. That, coupled with the technology and the techniques we use, creates the fidelity that Star Wars stands for.

On top of that, of course, it needs to play great. If it doesn't play great, you'll say, "Oh, the picture's nice — great trailer," and move on. We want you to live and breathe this game like you live and breathe Star Wars. So it's super-important to get the [feel] right, [not only] from the second you hit the ground shooting or take flight, but also in terms of longevity, variation, progression and persistence. So it's a mix of the authenticity of Star Wars, the fantasy of the battle, the

technology that drives it, the techniques that drive it, and also the tie-in and connection to Lucasfilm and the connection to Star Wars Episode VII and the Battle Of Jakku.

To me, that creates this very nice circle that encompasses what it should be. Because we spend a lot of energy just trying to think, "Well, what is it?" It'd be easy to just take the shovel and put stuff in there without considering it carefully. But this is sacred ground. We can't barge into the Star Wars universe and say, "A-ha! We know what to do! Let's just take our old games, put spray-tan on them and call them Star Wars games!" I think that's disrespectful.

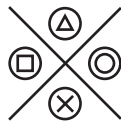


What's the secret to...

JULIAN GERIGHTY
THE CREW CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...making a big world fun to explore?

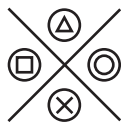
I think it's variety. Because making a big world by itself is fairly easy if it's going to be empty and boring; a desert. But being big is not what makes it interesting, it's the variety of the different terrain and then it's giving you the vehicles that allow you to explore those different environments.



MARK DARRAH
DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

...giving players meaningful story choices?

Really it's about dilemma more than choice. So if you just give me a choice where the answers are obvious – do you want to save a puppy or kick it across the room? – or if you give me a choice where the consequences have no meaning – like do you want chocolate or vanilla ice cream? – they're not dilemmas. It's really about feeling like both answers are plausible or possible, and both have consequences that you may not want to live with.



GAVIN PRICE
YOOKA-LAYLEE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...reviving the 3D platformer?

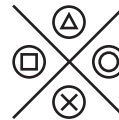
Pent-up passion for doing it. I've always loved these types of games, and I love that you can get slight variations, almost sub-genres, of them too: you can get so much variety in what you're doing in exploratory levels or scrolling levels... So high variety is [also] really key.



MATT THORSON
TOWERFALL: ASCENSION CREATOR

...the perfect multiplayer game?

Mind-games! Having lots of room to trick your friends and then trick people trying to trick you, and trick people who know that you're trying to trick them. That's what you need.

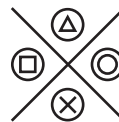


RUPERT FRIEND
HITMAN: AGENT 47 FILM ACTOR

...bringing a game character to life on the big screen?

There's so much involved in making a movie, let alone a videogame: directors and writers and production designers... and so only as far as I'm concerned, I don't think that gamers want to watch a film that is exactly a film of the game. I think that's what the game is for.

I think the film should be an extension and an augmentation of a videogame world, not a literal depiction of it. We want to add to this world, we don't want to just keep doing the same thing over and over, so for me it's translate don't transliterate.



JASON GRAVES
GAME COMPOSER

...composing the perfect videogame score?

Find the emotional core of the game. Every title connects with players in a different way – strengthen that emotional connection through music as much as possible.

Check out the prologue
in *Batman: Arkham*
Knight for a cheeky
Sefton Hill cameo.



SEFTON HILL
ROCKSTEADY GAMES CO-FOUNDER &
BATMAN ARKHAM SERIES GAME DIRECTOR

What's the secret to the perfect tie-in?

Obviously we have a tremendous amount of love for Batman and his universe, and I think that's the first thing we try never to forget.

We really want that to come across in the games that we make — how much we care about the games and how much we care about the universe — and that's a big part of it. I always say that that's not something you can really 'fake'. You can't really pretend for the amount of time and dedication that you need to put into game development.

There needs to be a genuine love for the thing that you're making for other people to feel that. So I guess that's the first thing: that passion and that dedication to what you're getting to work on. We always saw it —

and I still genuinely do see it — as a real privilege to get to work with this character that I've always loved, to work in this universe. That's a necessary ingredient. It's very hard to make something that has that kind of love and attention if you don't really believe that when you're making it.

We also really have the feeling that we're never satisfied with anything that we make. We're



Hill and the rest of Rocksteady have worked on Batman for almost a decade.

always thinking, and we constantly question how can it be better. We don't try and use any established mechanics to solve our games — it's about trying to create new ways, new mechanics and new things that we think really represent Batman more fundamentally than trying to shoehorn just any mechanic into Bats or into a licensed character.

I like to think that — obviously it's something other people can judge — if you took Batman out of the game, that people would still love it. But at the same time, if you took Batman out of the game and gave it to someone and said, "Guess who this is a game of?" that they would still immediately know because the mechanics speak to who the character is so directly. That's always our goal.

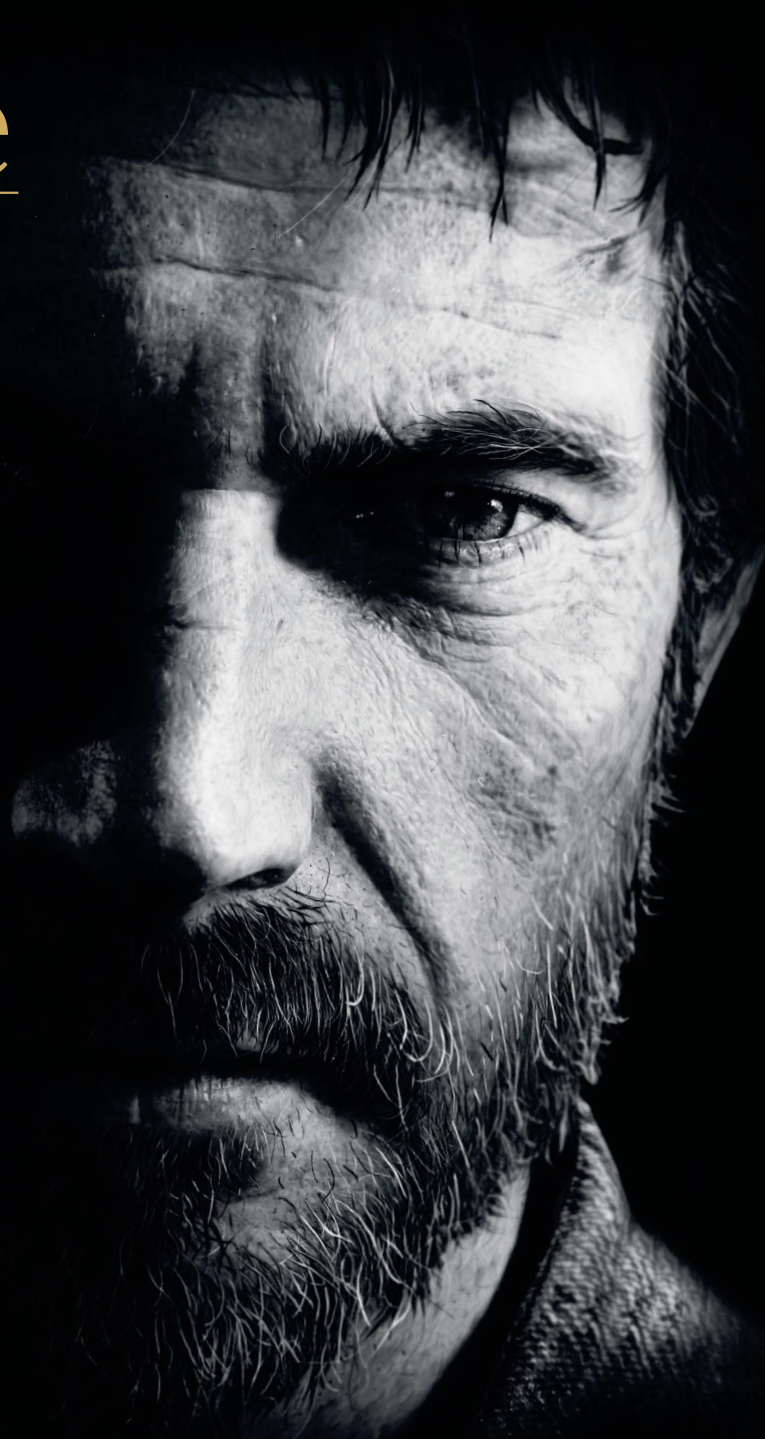


TROY BAKER
VOICE ACTOR

What's the secret to creating a character with just a voice?

At the end of the day it's all about the acting. Whatever mechanic you're using, whether it's the voice or, with performance capture, everything: the body, the face, the voice, you're having to overcome a lot.

Normally your wardrobe and the makeup, the hair, etc., gets you into that character, but performance capture actually plays against that. You're in the most *ridiculous* suit you can possibly imagine and you've got cameras in your face. So all of those mechanics that normally aid you are working against you, and you have to overcome those things. So I think there's no trick to it other than understanding where that character is, and you have to have a really amazing imagination because this is all theatre of the mind.



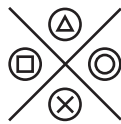
Baker's first major game role was the lead part in 2005's *Brothers In Arms: Road To Hill 30*.

What's the secret to...

RU WEERASURIYA
READY AT DAWN PRESIDENT &
THE ORDER: 1886
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...a killer game engine?

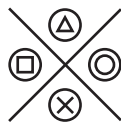
People. That's it. Many people talk about systems: what this system does, and what that system does. Systems can be rebuilt from the ground up. The thing that you can't rebuild is people. A lot of the senior guys [at Ready At Dawn] have known each other for ten years. That's how you become who you are; ideas germinate because you hear somebody else say something. The secret for us was really to let these guys do what they do best and telling everybody, "We're gonna go all out, we're just gonna do whatever we want, no holds barred. If we do that, what do you guys wanna do?" And people then picked up responsibilities on every side – engine, shaders, art, tools, design, and all of that builds great technology. We'll start a new technology at one point or another, but knowing that these people are there makes you keep going.



AARON MCHARDY
FIFA LEAD GAMEPLAY PRODUCER

...the perfect goal?

I'm a passer of the ball. I grew up playing central midfield, so that's my passion: setting up goals. I lean towards the 25-one-touch-passes-that-break-somebody-open type of goal. Though that's not to say that I don't appreciate a good scorcher from distance...



RYAN BARNARD
THE DIVISION GAME DIRECTOR

...doing 'post-apocalyptic' different?

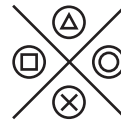
The big secret to that for us is we have to say it's 'mid-crisis' – that terminology is something we're owning with the game to make sure that we don't get lumped in with a post-apocalyptic crowd. We're on the brink of that moment where things could crash: there is a reason to fight and there is something you're fighting for.



HAJIME TABATA
FINAL FANTASY XV DIRECTOR

...the perfect Final Fantasy?

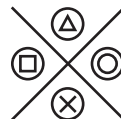
I have not pulled that off yet so I do not know! Please come back and ask me that question once I have created the perfect Final Fantasy game! [Laughs]



PIERS JACKSON
RIGS: MECHANIZED COMBAT LEAGUE
GAME DIRECTOR

...developing for Morpheus?

Plan. Think about it up front. Everything that you know through your decades of working in the games industry, you start again when it comes to working in VR on Morpheus and you build from the ground up. You have to think about what you're doing. For us, we always knew we wanted to challenge ourselves. We wanted to make a first-person shooter – we're Guerrilla, and we've done this in the past. People say you can't make a first person shooter; some say you shouldn't make a first person shooter for Morpheus. But that's the goal we set ourselves. And we deconstructed it and just built it from the ground up.



ERIC NEWGARD
IMPACT PROPS REPLICA GEAR CREATOR

...making a perfect replica?

Thinking outside the box. There isn't a guide or manual for making things that haven't been made before, so you have to be innovative and bold enough to try out methods that seem strange or unconventional. Don't be afraid to mess up, it's how you learn!



Destiny's Gjallarhorn – as tricky to recreate in replica form as it is to spell.

What's the secret to...



ALEX HUTCHINSON
FAR CRY 4 CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...a good villain?

I don't know that we know, but we try pretty hard. For us the goal is to get someone you haven't seen before; have someone a bit exotic, a bit outlandish. Someone with a personal relationship with the character and someone with strong opinions. Hopefully someone fresh. You know, I don't think there's any secret — you just grind away at it and then try and find a good actor who can embody it.



HIDETAKA MIYAZAKI
BLOODBORNE &
DARK SOULS CREATOR

...designing a perfect hardcore challenge?

Actually, I'd like to know the answer to that one myself! What I can tell you is, a thematic pillar of my game design is that feeling of accomplishment you get after surmounting incredible odds. All I do, really, is mull over how to go about making epic obstacles the player can set about conquering.



DAVID JAFFE
GOD OF WAR &
DRAWN TO DEATH CREATOR

...creating a new IP?

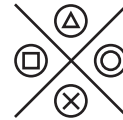
The secret is doing it. The secret is saying, "Do you have an idea that you fall in love with that you can't stop thinking about wanting to make?" I'm always at least one or two chess moves ahead, so there are two games I'm dying to make after Drawn To Death, but I don't know if we'll get to.

And then the secret, really, is just the hard work of building the team, finding the money and finding a publisher. It's finding those partners that you can surround yourself with who can make not just the game that you want to make, but who can turn that game into something even better. So that's the secret.

GRAHAM SMITH
DRINKBOX STUDIOS CO-FOUNDER

...being different?

Just try and think outside of the box and try not to copy what other people are doing. If you see someone else is doing something, let them do it and you do something different. That's it.

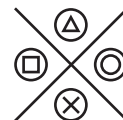


TARO YOKO
NIER CREATOR

...making a cult hit?

There's no recipe of course, but I have never wanted to make 'cult' games anyway. It's just... I suppose I have always tried to stay away from the mainstream kind of games. I wouldn't say I'm consciously making a very strange or weird game that ends up in people's memory. I just don't mix with what everybody likes.

Another thing is, it's probably essential to find a producer who allows you to make anything you want to do. Nier New Project is so weird, in a way, so I think [producer Yosuke Saito's] mad to invest so much money into it! [Laughs] There was a kind of 'Marmite effect' - either you loved it or you hated it - but in Japan there were lots of gamers who were mad about Nier.



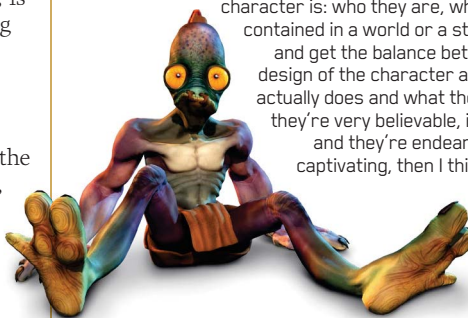
LORNE LANNING
ODD WORLD CREATOR

...creating an icon?

I think a lot of it is sheer luck; it's luck and timing. It's one thing to want to create something, it's another thing for it to become that. But the key in my opinion - and there's a lot of them out there - is that it takes some depth of character. On the surface,

Abe is a very superficial character with very simple needs. But underneath there's a lot going on. There's a lot driving who that character is and I think it's similar in that respect to film in that we appreciate deeper characters better.

For gaming I think the character really has to synergise with what the gameplay is, meaning it has to be integral to what that character is: who they are, what they do, how they're contained in a world or a story. If you get that right and get the balance between the production design of the character and what the character actually does and what they really believe... when they're very believable, in a believable universe, and they're endearing and emotionally captivating, then I think you've got a chance.



What's the secret to Naughty Dog's success?



EVAN WELLS
NAUGHTY DOG
CO-PRESIDENT

I don't know if there's a secret so much as it's a lot of hard work by a very talented team. We put a lot of faith in the people who we hire, and just count on them to hold that really high standard and that culture. It's really about the people, and we try to move all of the roadblocks out of the way for them just to do what they do best, which is create games.



CHRISTOPHE BALESTRA
NAUGHTY DOG
CO-PRESIDENT

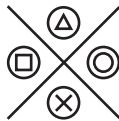
We keep a small team mentality as much as we can, even though we have a pretty big number of people. We just make sure that people can communicate easily. We don't have producers who just manage their time – everyone is their own producer here, which is a little bit different to what other studios do. We're just trying to make sure that they do what they love, and that's the most important thing.

What's the secret to...

NOUREDINE ABOUD
GHOST RECON WILDLANDS
SENIOR PRODUCER

...reinventing a beloved franchise?

I won't give lessons towards other games, but we're doing two things on our game. One is to stay true to the franchise: the core of it. As all Ghost Recon fans know, the key to Ghost Recon is those tactical elements and understanding that they are the core of the franchise. And then we also look at what the technology is bringing us. We were facing, in the past, many limitations; many things we couldn't do. When we saw the new consoles arriving we saw it was fantastic - we could increase the world [size] not for the sake of increasing it but to give many options to the players, more than we've ever had in the history of the franchise.



LUKE SMITH
DESTINY: THE TAKEN KING CREATIVE
DIRECTOR & VAULT OF GLASS DESIGNER

...great endgame content?

I don't know what the secret to great endgame content is. I don't know that anyone does. For The Taken King, we wanted to have a cool thrill-ride through the campaign and then [for you to] be ejected out of that and have a bunch of different stuff for you to go out and do: activities that can reach and grab you for every mood, whether you're interested in Strikes, or running around the Dreadnaught fortress to figure out how it works.

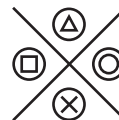
The thing that I'm most excited about is watching groups of people come together to solve problems, and in a bunch of ways that's what the Vault Of Glass was: it was a series of interconnected problems that your group of six needed to solve. That philosophy is definitely present in some of The Taken King and certainly present in the Dreadnaught design. The design goal was for it to be an inscrutable loot-filled fortress, and the thing that we imagined when we talk about it is, "How are the communities on the internet going to band together to put it all together?" It becomes a cool opportunity for the Community (with a capital C!) to solve puzzles that we've constructed for them, and then to build puzzles into a ritual that they can engage with and come back and check out.



CHRISTIAN ELVERDAM
HITMAN CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...the perfect hit?

We've obviously thought about that a lot! I would boil it down to freedom of choice. We're trying to create a sandbox with that very clear rule of 'There is our Hitman and the target - the rest is all up to you'. That would be my interpretation, and then all the variations of that is what makes the game fun because you don't know what to expect from each hit to the next. Freedom of choice: a target and a Hitman.



ALMIR LISTO
PAYDAY 2 GLOBAL BRAND DIRECTOR

...the perfect heist?

To bring the right people - that's the first step. If you have the right crew with you when you heist, you can come out of any difficult situation. If you have the wrong crew you might want to stealth the heist but someone is a loose cannon and suddenly the sh*t hits the fan and everything goes nuts. The other thing is to have the right setup. If you're going to do a stealth heist, you need to dress for the occasion. The same goes for a loud mission. When you basically want to go in guns blazing you need to have the right skillsets, the right weapons, and the right mask of course - because you've got to look the part as well in order to commit the perfect crime.



ANDREW WITTS
RAINBOW SIX SIEGE
GAMEPLAY DESIGNER

...the perfect siege situation?

One where the defence is ready and has set up their defences [properly], because without that the siege is over very quickly! When we were making Siege's Terrohunt mode, we knew all the ingredients that the AI would have to use. We wanted the AI to be aware that the players were coming so, in the case of the Disarm Bomb game mode, the AI is not sitting there smoking cigarettes anymore; they're actively prepared and they set traps.

Antoniades started out as the director, writer and programmer on Xbox's Kung Fu Chaos.



TAMEEM ANTONIADES
NINJA THEORY CO-FOUNDER

What's the secret to perfect action?

I think it's probably expression. Good action involves letting the player express themselves and create their own style with the tools that they have.

So the tools can be simple, like it is in something like Bomberman, for example. I would say that's a perfect action game, because the mechanics are incredibly simple but there's endless variation and expression in how you fight and how you play. In a combat game, giving the player the tools to express themselves and then rewarding them for that is the goal – not being too prescriptive.



Ninja Theory's reboot of the DMC franchise revitalised Dante and co.

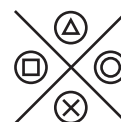
What's the secret to...

RICHARD HOGG
HONEYSLUG DESIGNER

...standing out?

I think it's really obvious: make something that doesn't look like all the other videogames. Ours is a very conservative medium. So many games look and feel similar, and even the slightest deviation is heralded as ground-breaking or risky. Make something that is a bigger deviation from the norm (as we did with Hohokum) and everyone asks you what drugs you were on when you made it.

But it isn't actually that crazy. It's just that in terms of how it looks, feels and sounds and plays, Hohokum had more in common with stuff going on outside of videogames. If more people were doing that then it would be a lot harder to stand out, but at the moment it's like shooting space marines in a barrel...



MICHITERU OKABE
RESIDENT EVIL REVELATIONS 2
PRODUCER

...surviving a zombie attack?

I get a suspicious feeling that there is a deeper underlying purpose to this question, but I'll provide a straight answer in any case! My advice: bring together, and stick with, a group of friends who you can trust with your life.



KEITA TAKAHASHI
KATAMARI DAMACY & WATTAM CREATOR

...connecting people?

The idea for Wattam came when I was playing with my two-year-old son. I'm Japanese, you're British, and I can speak in Japanese but you wouldn't get it; so we all have many differences such as language, countries, age, etc. But maybe we can get over differences by making something nice – something fun like a videogame with different people. Stacking [Wattam's] characters is just fun, and exploding them is a lot of fun too!





HARRISON PINK
TELLTALE'S THE WALKING DEAD DESIGNER

What's the secret to an emotional scene?

If I knew that, I'd be a millionaire! You have to earn it. Emotional connections just can't be forged. You can't say: this person is your brother, you care about them, now you care.

You have to earn that through time spent together. If we just told you, "Hey Lee, Clementine is yours, take care of her." Well, he doesn't care about something right away — she has to earn her place in your heart. There's a reason that she says you have to be quiet. There's a reason that she gives you the hammer. There's a reason that she does all the things that she does. It's because when that game was being made, the leads on that game knew that people are going to be opposed to taking care of Clementine.

We, as gamers, have been taught that dealing with

escort quests and dealing with little kids in games is just a pain in the ass. They're just really lame and that stuff sucks. So there's going to be an emotional bias in games having this character wander around with you and having to protect them. So we have to do everything we can to get the player to buy in. You can't just tell the player: you have now bought in. You have to just earn it.

One of the ways that Telltale makes games is, when you make a dialogue choice, you press a button and the game records that and remembers that. We only show the big five choices at the end, but it records everything you're doing.

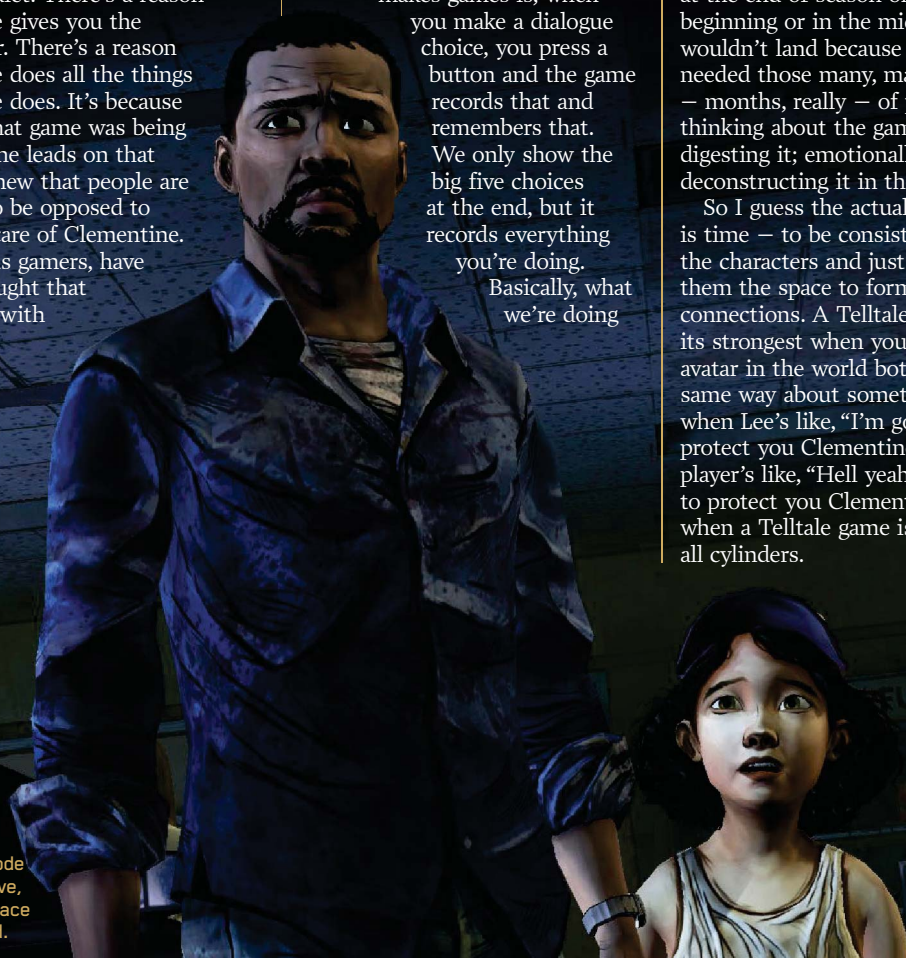
Basically, what we're doing

is just asking: who is the person on the other side of the screen? What affects you? What do you care about? And then try and tailor the gameplay to really hone in on that.

You can't just pop into a seat with somebody sitting next to you and go: "Oh I care about you now." The person has to be important to you and there has to be an emotional bond that you have to build over time. If we tried to pull the stunt we did at the end of season one at the beginning or in the middle, it just wouldn't land because you just needed those many, many hours — months, really — of people thinking about the game and just digesting it; emotionally deconstructing it in their heads.

So I guess the actual secret is time — to be consistent with the characters and just give them the space to form their own connections. A Telltale game's at its strongest when you and your avatar in the world both feel the same way about something. So when Lee's like, "I'm going to protect you Clementine," and a player's like, "Hell yeah, I'm going to protect you Clementine," that's when a Telltale game is firing on all cylinders.

From the beginning of episode one to the end of episode five, season one's story takes place across a four-month period.

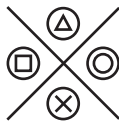


What's the secret to...

ED BOON
MORTAL KOMBAT CO-CREATOR

...a great Fatality?

It has to be a combination of entertaining and shocking – just the right balance between those two.



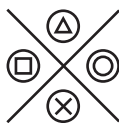
CHARLES CECIL
BROKEN SWORD CREATOR

...designing an iconic conundrum?

Nobody cares how difficult a puzzle is, as long as when you solve it you go, "Of course!" If you turn around and say to yourself, "How could I possibly have known that?" then it's a really bad puzzle. Point and click adventures are full of bad puzzles. Frankly, it's so much easier to come up with bad puzzles. Anybody could come up with rubbish puzzles.

We work really really hard to make our puzzles logical; in the context of the objects you are using and also in the context of that character and what their motivations are at that time, plus the story. We reject so many puzzles. We see things that are nice ideas but they aren't logical.

So, number one: it's got to be logical in the context of the character and the story. Two: it's got to be difficult for that, "Of course," moment. And three: if it's going to be iconic it's got to be fun as well. It needs to be the climax of various elements all coming together, both in terms of a narrative and in terms of breadcrumb trails that you're given. You mentally go, "There's a reason I have this object and there's a reason he said that," and then, suddenly, the very best puzzles are the ones where everything comes back and you go, "OF COURSE!" That, "Of course," comes from the object manipulation, from the narrative perspective and the character motivation. That is how you truly develop an iconic puzzle.



JOHN CENA
WWE SUPERSTAR

...never giving up?

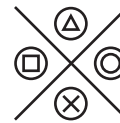
[Laughs] If you want to give up: don't.



KEIJI INAFUNE
MIGHTY NO 9 & MEGA MAN CREATOR

...being mighty?

Being mighty is about believing in your own abilities and having confidence in what you set out to achieve.

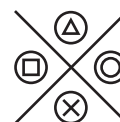


GUHA BALA
VICARIOUS VISIONS PRESIDENT

...designing a great Skylander?

So this is both fun as well as moving. We had a Make A Wish child come to our studio who's a huge Skylanders fan and has a terrible terminal illness. Skylanders helped him get through some of the treatment he had, so as part of his Make A Wish he chose to come to the studio. Our concept artist and designer sat with him and he came prepped with ideas for what his ideal Skylander would be. They were after his dogs, so there's a real world inspiration, and then as he was talking the designer broke it down into fantastical powers and attributes to help him structure an upgrade tree. As these unfolded the concept artist drew the visuals. He came up with Lieutenant Lick-A-Lot and Sergeant Sleep-A-Lot. It was a really special, moving moment.

So that's similar to how we come up with a Skylander in the sense that we look at: What's really original and meaningful? Well, something the player can attach to. What is something we can do to make it interesting in gameplay? They're the powers that don't just broadly fit into classes but make a Skylander memorable as the guy who does *that*. And then a visual treatment that makes you remember it. That's essentially the process we go through, but it's fun to see it play out in a child's mind as well.



SEAN MCCABE
RATCHET & CLANK PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

...a great reimagination?

I think it's being a fan, ourselves. We are some of the biggest Ratchet fans on the planet – I didn't work on the original but the original Metropolis demo is why I came to Insomniac and why I was drawn to the company. We have so many people who love this universe and know so much about it. That's where it starts for me – it's just loving Ratchet & Clank.





DAVID CAGE
QUANTIC DREAM CEO & HEAVY RAIN DIRECTOR

What's the secret to a great plot twist?

wish I knew the magic recipe for a great plot twist, because I would use it all the time!

I also know many writers in videogames, TV series or films who would kill to discover it. Unfortunately, the truth is that there is none. The idea is very simple: creating a major surprise at some point in the story that will make the audience reconsider the entire story under a different light, but the implementation is extremely challenging.

The tricky part is that, beyond being a surprise, a twist also needs to be consistent and coherent, so the audience doesn't feel they have been cheated with a twist coming from nowhere or that they absolutely could not guess. If you reveal that the murderer was the passer-by walking in your first shot, it is not a great twist, because there is no way the audience could guess it and it has no real connection with the rest of the story.

So a successful twist is a very subtle balance between giving the right clues to the audience so they have a chance to guess the true story if they are really clever (and most of all, everything makes sense if they watch the story again knowing the secret) but at the same time not making it too obvious so it's unlikely

that anyone will be able to guess it before it's revealed.

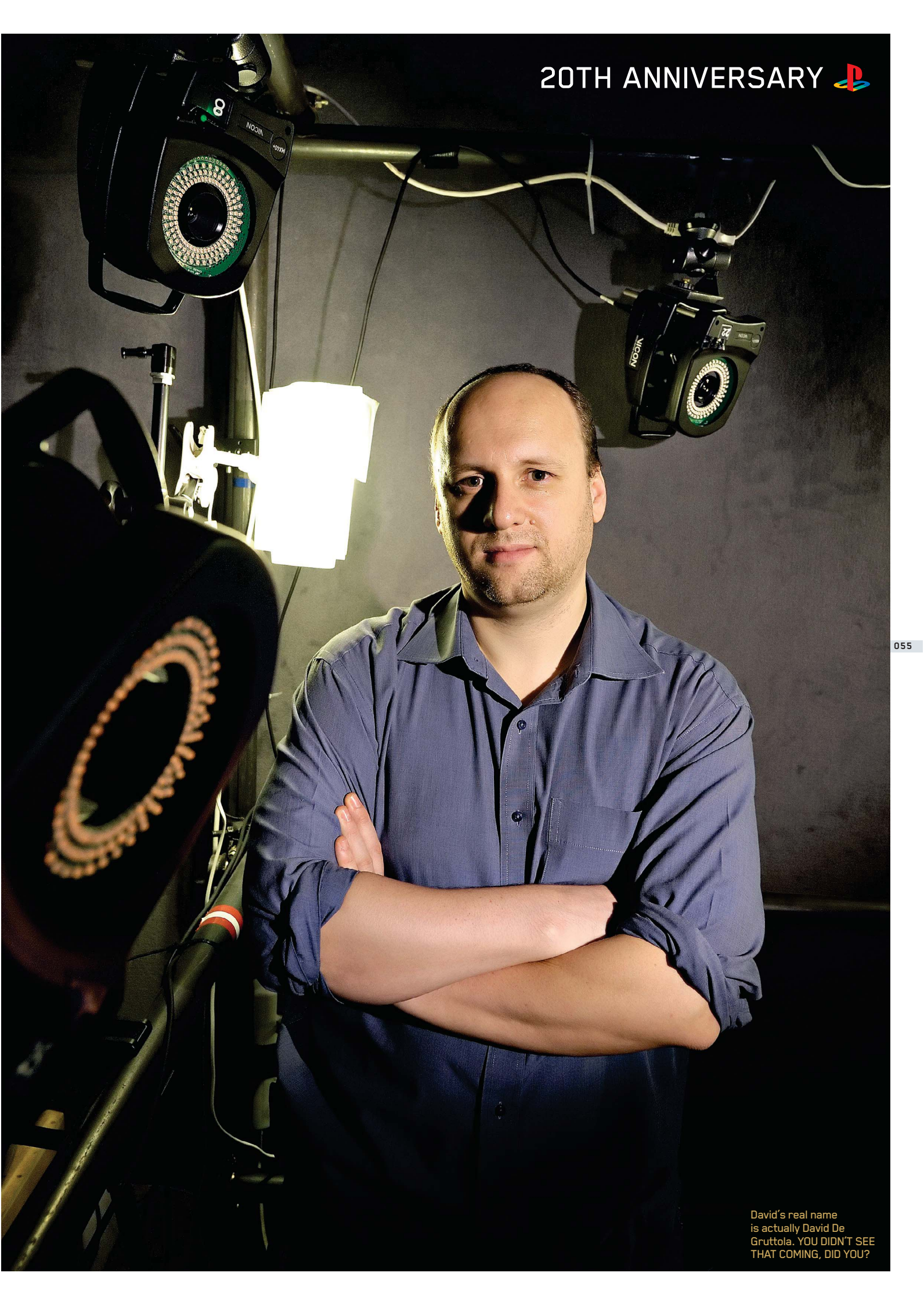
For all these reasons, twists are actually quite rare in films and even more so in games. They are very difficult to build and they can be quite frustrating if they are not implemented correctly. My favourite twists are probably M Night Shyamalan's *The Sixth Sense*, Alan Parker's *Angel Heart* and Alejandro Amenábar's *The Others*. Watching the film for the second time offers a very different experience, which is one of the most enjoyable aspects of plot twists.

I had a lot of fun writing the plot twist in *Heavy Rain* (although it was quite a challenge to write a twist involving the player...). What

I enjoyed the most was to see how surprised and shocked some players were when they discovered the truth. I remember how much we feared that it would be revealed right away on forums by the very first players completing the game, but most have been very co-operative and kept the secret for themselves.

Because, of course, the most important thing to remember about plot twists is: never spoil them!







DAVID VONDERHAAR
CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS III'S DESIGN DIRECTOR

What's the secret to the perfect Call Of Duty map?

We have a couple of things that are super-important to us when it comes to map-making, and these were all things that we had to relearn because of all the new movement with Black Ops III's thrust jump and wall run and swimming and power-sliding. We talk a lot about what we call 'keeping the combat in frame', and what I mean by that is no matter where you're standing, anywhere in the map, you feel like you have a picture in front of you of where the action could be.

We don't want you to feel like you can be, for lack of a better phrase, shot from anywhere. So, certainly, people can come up behind you and people can flank you, but you don't want to feel enveloped or surrounded just all the time. When you start a match — and you look out — you need to understand right away that the way to navigate the map is this way, this way, and this way. So there's never more than (decision-making wise) three decisions in your brain about how you move or where you 'check-down'. And that's really key.

What I mean by that is I check that corner, I check that window, I check that path and people are most likely to be there, there, or there. So if I make the wrong decision about my check-down, which order I go in, then it's all on me, because I should've checked-down in a different order. But if I check them down correctly then I have the advantage in the fight.

[For Black Ops III] what was pretty interesting to us was that we were making all the new combat movement mechanics very early on in development, and we forgot to understand how we should apply those principles when you're a little more vertical, or when you're swimming under the map. In the end, ironically, all that stuff finally made sense

and started to feel good when we went right back to that core principle philosophy about three-lane design, about keeping the combat in frame and about being able to check-down.

As soon as we went back and reapplied all the lessons we had learned up to this point to the new combat movement, then it actually got fun again and we knew we were going to be okay.



Vonderhaar's head is used on one of the ISA's multiplayer character models in Call Of Duty: Black Ops II. One for the CV, that.

What's the secret to...



IAN MILHAM
BATTLEFIELD HARDLINE
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...the perfect Battlefield map?

I think the real part where Battlefield shines is in its breadth and depth. If you're a super-accurate, high speed twitch-shooter guy – a real gunslinger – you can do that.

But there are so many ways to be successful through helping out teammates, operating vehicles and doing all kinds of stuff. A great Battlefield map needs to allow all those different people to

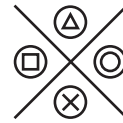
succeed and have fun in all those different ways. So you really need spatial variety.

You need all kinds of areas: some of them that are protected from the vehicles; some where the vehicles rule; some that are way high up; some that are way low down. And of course, a good flow between all those different types of spots, so different people can all have a good time.

CHARLIE MCDONNELL
VOLUME VOICE ACTOR

...becoming a YouTube star?

Get a time machine, go back to 2007, start making videos and hope for the best. If possible, be a cute British boy. If there are other secrets, I'm not aware of them.



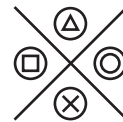
PHILLIP RING
TT GAMES EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

...the perfect Lego level?

It doesn't need to be about the combat and it doesn't need to be about the puzzles – it needs to be something that you weren't expecting. So you're going through a level and you'll see something and it'll either be on an epic scale that you weren't expecting or there are loads of secrets or loads of cool things.

So there's genuine surprise.

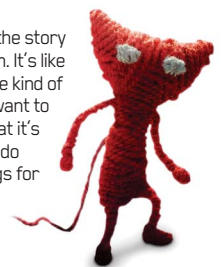
We know that with The Avengers, for instance, at the point that you're Thor fighting Loki at the top of Stark Tower, we want that to be really epic but it also has to create surprise. It needs to show something that you weren't expecting because otherwise it's just a one-to-one representation of the film, and we don't like to do that. We like to do something [new], whether that's adding humour or puzzles. Whatever it is, it's about that genuine surprise so people see it and go, "Wow! That's cool. I wasn't expecting that." That, to me, is what's great about these games. It's that ability to say, "You know what? I thought I knew what was going to happen and I wasn't expecting that!"



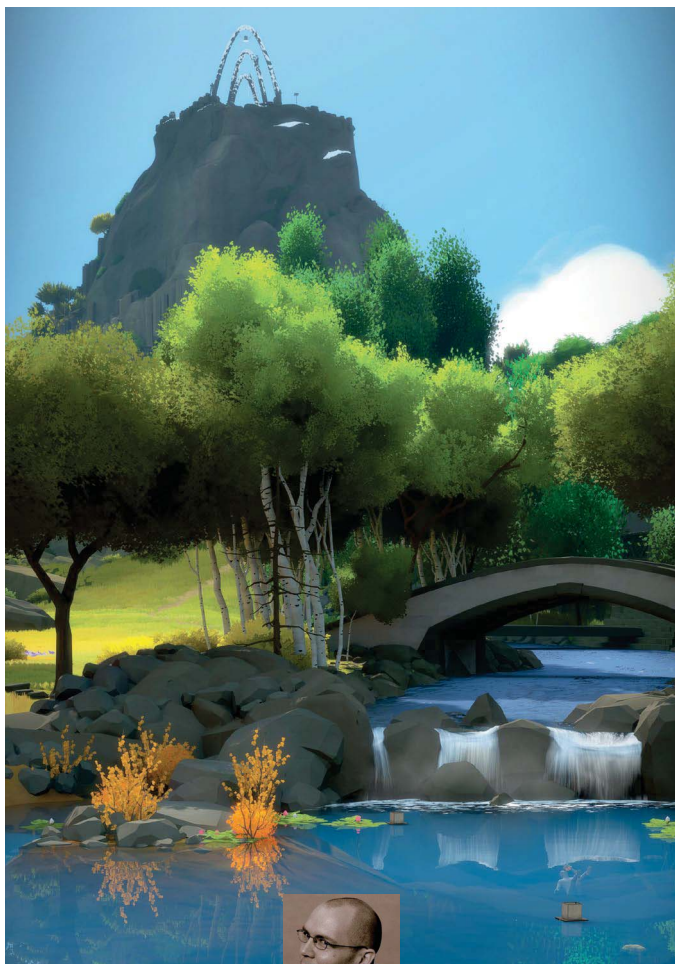
MARTIN SAHLIN
UNRAVEL CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...telling the perfect story without speech?

The secret is letting the player come to the story rather than just trying to push it on them. It's like once we have their attention – which we kind of get through the character – then they want to experience it and want to figure out what it's all about. Then we don't really have to do much more than supply interesting things for them to find.



What's the secret to...



JONATHAN BLOW
THE WITNESS & BRAID CREATOR

...perfecting a puzzle?

Well you have to define perfecting a puzzle, right? Like what does 'perfect' mean? I don't think of it that way. I don't think of perfecting it.

In The Witness especially, the puzzles are all designed around what we think is happening inside someone's mind as they first see it. You see something, you have an interpretation of what maybe that is, and then there's this process. You're

investigating: "Let me try something..." or, "Oh, that wasn't the right thing," or, "Oh that was the right thing," or, "It gave me a little traction and then I can develop my understanding."

There's a whole arc of what happens, and I'm trying to design for that whole arc, whereas I feel that a lot of people don't necessarily do that. They're just like, "Here's a thing to solve." I think designing for that full experience is important.



MATT WEBSTER
CRITERION GENERAL MANAGER

...ripping up the rulebook?

You've got to start. I had a great presentation at a thing EA did – it gets a bunch of people together and brings in some external speakers, and we had a wonderful one by a guy called Alistair Humphreys.

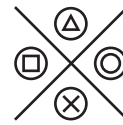
It was really inspiring. He classes himself as an adventurer and he tells a wonderful story, and he says: think big, start small, but start. And that's the thing I think that struck me the most: you've just got to start.



BRIAN FLEMING
 SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS
 CO-FOUNDER &
 INFAMOUS: SECOND SON PRODUCER

...a perfect sandbox?

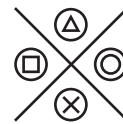
In a game where players can go anywhere, actually getting there has to be a huge part of the fun. I don't care if it's cars, motorcycles, bicycles or super powers – moving around, over and through the world has always been an area of critical focus for us. Our measure of success is, after you play the game and you're walking around outside, are you constantly inspired to try the things you did in the game? If yes, then that's what victory feels like!



NAOKI YOSHIDA
 FINAL FANTASY XIV: A REALM REBORN
 DIRECTOR

...making a great MMO?

The MMORPG genre is very risky in terms of business – there are so many features that you might want to include that drop out. You shouldn't give up, say, when the server structure has some issues or some limitations – you just need to explain to the community what is happening. The communication to the players is that we never give up. Voices from the community tend to be more like a negative thing: "Please fix this," rather than, "This part was really good." So all the development team reading the feedback and messages could get hurt, but this is the community's true voice. It's not that they're attacking us or anything, so the development team have to be motivated to keep going and try to improve the game. Basically: don't give up!



SARAH WELLOCK
 LITTLEBIGPLANET 3 COMMUNITY MANAGER

...the perfect community-created level?

The best levels have a lot of verticality and they really play with the idea of space and layers in the game. We've had some great levels done – one of our first big LittleBigPlanet 2 levels was really great because it played with the idea of big and small and height whilst actually not being that complicated for people to play. Some of the levels that don't do so well are the ones that feature tech over actual gameplay, so when people jump in they want to play but they can't get from A to B. I think the three key ingredients to making the best levels are the location, patience and just fun – that last one's what LittleBigPlanet's all about.



HERMEN HULST
 GUERRILLA GAMES MANAGING DIRECTOR

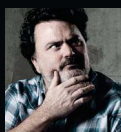
...wowing gamers?

Wow. That is almost a question for the audience isn't it? So I think people love... they love the idea of Horizon's mechanical creatures against a backdrop of a beautiful post-apocalyptic world.

That's definitely something that people picked up on. But I think it's also, probably, the concept in its entirety. It's you being Aloy; this young woman who's a robot huntress, and then you see this world you could call somewhat

mysterious, and you cross paths with these gigantic machines that clearly overpower you.

As soon as you start dissecting it and selecting the one best thing that wows people, you lose the entirety of the concept. I think it's particularly the combination of the juxtaposition of nature and machines. It's the juxtaposition of Aloy's size and cleverness against the brutish power of these machines – that's exactly what appeals to people.



TIM SCHAFER
DOUBLE FINE PRODUCTIONS
FOUNDER

What's the secret to making a classic?

Uh... Let's see, a lot of coffee... A classic is something that people care about long after it was made, and so I feel like that means you should be doing something that connects on a human level.

Whether it's a drama or a comedy it can have this connection between the person making it and the person playing it. And if it's really human and sincere, it will just last for many years. If what you're doing is not based on novelty or some kind of trend but a more human thing, then I think it will last.



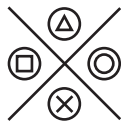
Grim Fandango is a true 'classic' – and soon PS4 will add Day Of The Tentacle to its ranks.

What's the secret to...

REX CROWLE
MEDIA MOLECULE CREATIVE LEAD

...having fun?

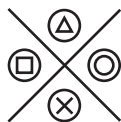
Wow, that is quite a hard question! We used to joke about it, particularly on LittleBigPlanet. We used to say, "This level isn't fun enough," and then we'd be like, "But what does that mean?" [Laughs] There's an element of self-expression definitely; whether you're throwing mud pies at each other when you're eight-years-old or you're exploring an alien world on your PlayStation. I think there's an element of just feeling like you've found something that wasn't necessarily created just for you – you just found it. Say, with the mud pie situation: you tried to throw something at one person but it hit someone else. Or whether that's in a more physics-sandbox type of a game, where something doesn't happen quite as it was set up but you get a different outcome and have an enjoyable reaction to the situation... which is a really abstract way of trying to describe it!



PETE PARSONS
BUNGIE CEO

...building something new?

At Bungie we've always been ambitious, and for Destiny we asked: "What is the game we've always wanted to make?" And that's what we set out to do. You start with this big ambitious dream and you start doing some research and development for some of the possibilities – what would happen in these large public areas, for instance? – and you don't really know what the answer is, but you need to start asking all the right questions. Fortunately we answered some of the better questions!



STEVE JARRATT
THE OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
LAUNCH EDITOR

...launching a magazine?

Be in the right place at the right time. Have a passion for the subject matter. Surround yourself with talented people. Understand your craft; learn from others. Don't overcomplicate things. Know what your readers respond to. Try and launch something connected with a product or topic that is immensely popular, with the backing of one of the world's biggest electronics companies, and then make the magazine invaluable by sticking a demo disc on the front. Easy!

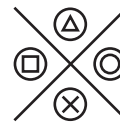


JASON VANDENBERGHE
FOR HONOR DIRECTOR

...great melee combat?

One of the most important things is the mind-game. It's that I am trying to predict what you are trying to predict, right? That experience is central, and for For Honor, we've put that on the right stick and we've put that in our stances. I need to look to see where you are defending yourself – and I need to try and get there – but moving my stick in a position to attack in the place you're open then opens me up... So I have to make this decision about what I'm going to do.

Fundamentally, that's where it comes from, and it's the heart of For Honor. You take that system where I'm trying to guess the mind-game, and it gets better and better when those choices get stronger and different from each other. This is sort of the Yomi theory of fight stuff. If you're familiar with it, it's sort of the essence of what makes fighting great: "I think your best choice is to attack me like this, but I know you know that I know that, so I'm probably going to guess that you're going to do the other thing..." and then BANG! I've out-fought you, right? That's also how it is in real life when you're doing real fighting; that same dynamic of trying to predict what you're going to do. If I can catch you, if I can predict it correctly, I can win the fight in one hit.



MARC-ALEXIS CÔTÉ
ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...a great location?

A city that has a lot of diversity. That's something that London is providing us with like no other city before. I remember when I visited London – I was amazed by how each part of the city feels a bit different. You can feel it was the centre of an empire and a lot of things that were inspired by the empire came back to London.

So we can make every borough – I was told not to use the word 'district' ever, so I'm just trying to get rid of it but sometimes I slip! – feel different. The player should feel the poverty in Whitechapel, and when they're in Westminster they should feel more political influence. When you're near Buckingham Palace you should feel more royal influence, and when you're in the City Of London you feel more of the financial side of it.

One of the places that's very different from what we see today is the South Shore, with all its factories and everything. Everywhere the player goes, each borough will have a different story.





SEAN MURRAY
HELLO GAMES MANAGING DIRECTOR

What's the secret to being a successful indie developer?

I don't know that we've cracked that, you know? We've released Joe Danger, which is actually a bunch of games and they've been reasonably successful. But No Man's Sky will probably destroy us — bankrupt us in some way! People seem behind it at the moment but that just scares me.

Is there even such a thing as a successful indie developer? Because [many] seem to have success and then often not follow it up, so how do you even judge it? There are people like Capy who've been around for years and years — ask them! We've done, effectively, one franchise and so I don't feel like we've been successful yet.



Hello Games' next game is No Man's Sky - you'll hear much more about it in a future issue of OPM.

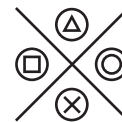
20TH ANNIVERSARY 

What's the secret to...

CHRIS PAYTON
SNIPER ELITE III HEAD OF ART

...the perfect headshot?

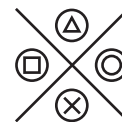
Slow it right down. Blur all the extraneous detail, drop it right back. Give more depth, contrast, colour to the thing you're looking at. Give it a dynamic play and don't let it get repetitive. With your dynamic camera, make it so you could shoot 500 different people in the head and every time it's going to be different. I'm talking about it from an art perspective, but don't overlook the other departments either. The killcam without the sound? Rubbish. All the departments - the sound, the design, the code team - really have to work together.



ADAM ORTH
ADRIFT DIRECTOR & THREE ONE ZERO
FOUNDER

...building a studio?

You have to have the right team. If you don't have the right team you don't have a studio. I've been on a lot of great teams and a lot of really dysfunctional teams. Our team is just the greatest team - it's like a dream come true for me and hopefully all the other guys because there's just so much trust and faith in each other that I don't have to be involved in every decision. It was difficult for me in the beginning to let go of that, but it was definitely a learning experience. I hired these guys because they're my friends first and they're awesome game developers, and Adr1ft is their game now. This is not just my game.



ALEX RIGOPULOS
HARMONIX SYSTEMS FOUNDER

...the perfect rhythm action experience?

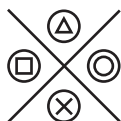
I'd say that there is no such thing as 'the perfect rhythm action experience' because rhythm action mechanics are just one ingredient in a total play experience, and the universe of possible play experiences that could utilise rhythm action is so vast. Take three examples: Amplitude, Fantasia: Music Evolved and Rhythm Heaven. All three of these games have rhythm action at the heart of their gameplay, but the 'secrets' (such as they are) to making these games feel great are completely different from one game to the next.

What's the secret to...

HIROKI CHIBA
WORLD OF FINAL FANTASY DIRECTOR

...Final Fantasy's success?

Final Fantasy is always looking for new things to do: new challenges and new surprises to give to fans. That's why the fans have stayed with us for so long.

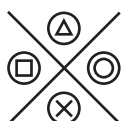


ANTHONY BURCH
BORDERLANDS 2 WRITER

...making somebody laugh?

God, if I knew that then we would have scored even higher! Comedy is built on surprise: setting up an expectation and then going against that expectation. The big difference is about changing expectation in ways that make you pleasantly surprised, or unpleasantly surprised if you're going for dark humour. For example, the 'Shoot this Guy in the Face' quest. The reason that works – if that quest does work and you do find it funny, which you're welcome not to – is you've spent the entire time killing a bunch of people who don't want to get killed, and doing these really, really long quests that have many multiple objectives and are really difficult, and then you meet one person who wants to be killed, has no gameplay associated with him and the quest takes two seconds to finish. It's a pattern break.

Because it's the opposite of what you expect, and because that guy just has a really good line when he's going to get shot and says thank you, it makes you laugh. It's sort of the straight man/funny guy thing – you need something that's relatively normal for a long time to set up a pattern so that when the funny thing happens which breaks the pattern it feels like a laugh. Rather than just like, "This is a random world where stupid sh*t's happening all the time and who knows? Anything could happen! Ha, ha, ha..." That can get tiresome after a while.



SHINJI MIKAMI
RESIDENT EVIL &
THE EVIL WITHIN CREATOR

...scaring somebody?

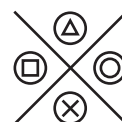
Dark and narrow, that's scary. That's not my definition but that's a general definition: it's dark and narrow or small. The asylum in The Evil Within, that's scary!



RHIANNA PRATCHETT
SCRIPT WRITER

...writing a great gaming script?

Use all the good words in a pleasing order! But seriously, I'm not sure there's one 'secret' to it as it's down to a combination of factors. Making sure that the narrative and gameplay mesh well together is probably most important. That means story and game design have to go hand-in-hand, not story on top of gameplay. Story should be like the chocolate chips in the game cookie, not the icing on the cake. Thinking about story, character and narrative flow early on certainly helps, as does getting in narrative professionals to work on it. Ultimately it's about treating narrative as seriously as any other part of a game's development.



PHIL ROBB
TURTLE ROCK CO-FOUNDER & EVOLVE
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

...crafting the perfect co-op experience?

Everyone's going to have a different idea about what that is. You can put people together in a group and order them to cooperate and some of them certainly might, but the way the internet works these days and the way gamers tend to be, it's safe to assume that they're probably not going to...

You've got to try to build in game mechanics that encourage co-op and reward players based on what they're supposed to do. So when you're the medic and you're healing your guys, you're getting positive reinforcement. Firstly from your guys, because you're more likely to win if you work together. And then on top of that, at the end of the round we show you how you did and all the healing you did: "Good job!"

If somebody doesn't want to co-operate there's not a lot you can do to force them, and that's one of the weaknesses of multiplayer gaming. The thing is, I like hanging out with my friends. When I can't hang out with my friends I certainly like playing games with my friends. So what makes a perfect co-op experience? I can't really say; I just know that at Turtle Rock we make the kind of games that we want to play, and all of our ideas come when we're sitting around and we say, "Hey, wouldn't it be cool if..." Usually it's a very simple idea. Sometimes it's out of the blue. Sometimes it's because we played some game that's either mediocre or bad, but there's some little element there where they really hit the nail on the head and have some tiny gem – and we don't know why they didn't take that one part and make it into a full game. If you ever hear us trying to tell you we have some high-minded artsy-fartsy explanation about why we've done a game it's just bullsh*t – we just want to have an experience that no one else was giving us so we decided to make it.

**SHUHEI YOSHIDA**SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
WORLDWIDE STUDIOS PRESIDENT

What's the secret to PlayStation's success?

The 'secret' of PlayStation's success? I would pick something we at PlayStation have always strongly believed from developing the original PlayStation 'til today – that is believing in the power of talented, passionate game developers.

PlayStation has created powerful console hardware taking advantage of cutting edge technology; democratized game publishing by adopting disc media with very low cost and fast manufacturing capabilities; marketed videogames as a cool interactive entertainment that all ages of people can enjoy and share. But we did so always believing that by creating a powerful platform and ecosystem, talented game developers will create amazing gameplay experiences to entertain consumers in the global market.



Yoshida's now one of our favourite protagonists thanks to his Super Time Force Ultra cameo.





ONE OF THE LAST 20TH ANNIVERSARY PLAYSTATION 4S IN EXISTENCE!

Own a piece of PlayStation history
with our amazing competition

You can't buy them in stores, and if you are ever lucky enough to spy one on eBay you'll probably need to remortgage your house to be in with a shout of winning it. But this month, the dream of owning an ultra-rare anniversary edition PS4 becomes reality for one of our lucky readers.

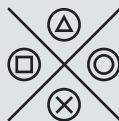
To enter our competition for a chance to win the 20th anniversary PlayStation 4, head to www.futurecomps.co.uk/OPM20 and answer this question before 30 Oct:

Who was the lead system architect for PlayStation 4?

- A)** Ken Kutaragi
- B)** Mark Cerny
- C)** Shuhei Yoshida

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